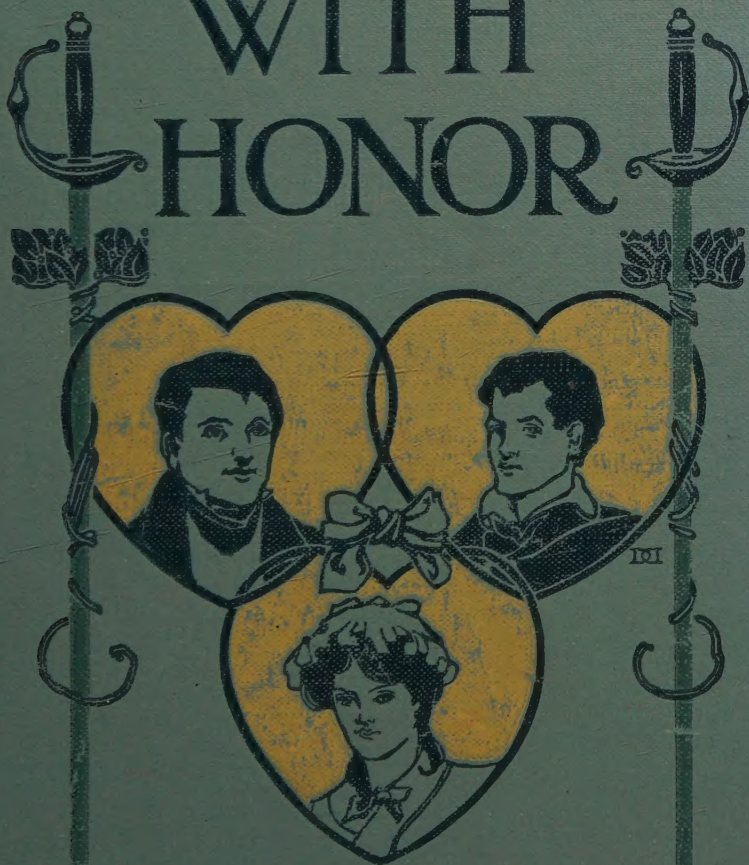


IN TREATY WITH HONOR



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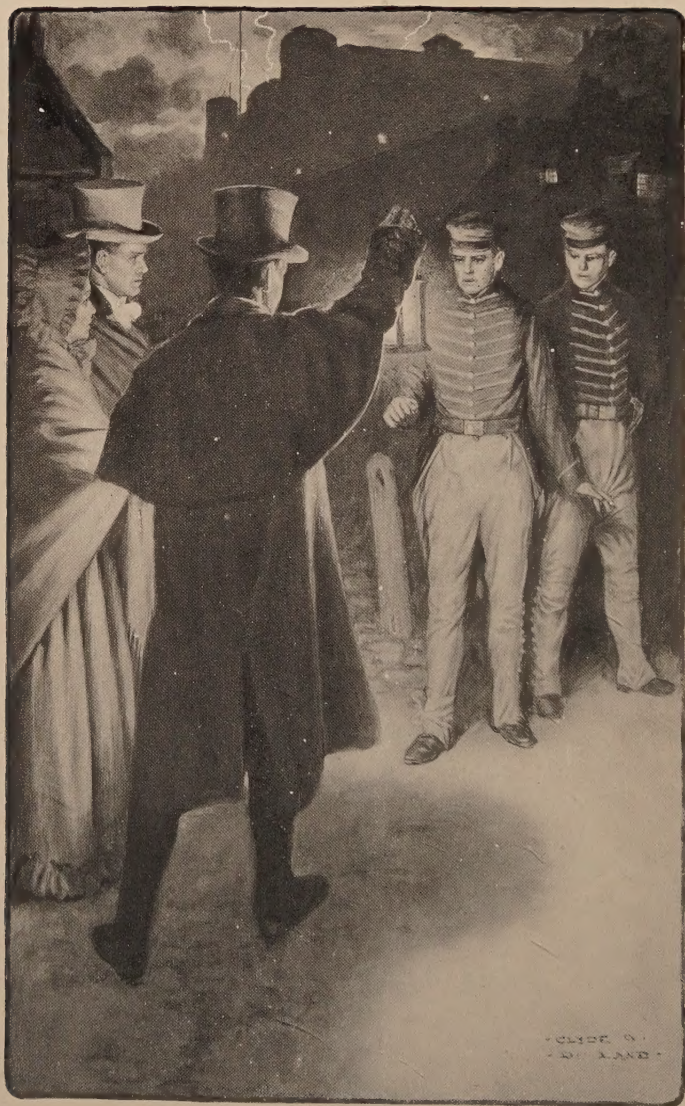
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In Treaty with Honor



“‘You are Major Adair, the American prisoner,’ he cried
in astonishment.” *Frontispiece. See page 244.*

In Treaty with Honor

A Romance of Old Quebec

By

Mary Catherine Crowley

Author of "A Daughter of New France," "The Heroine
of the Strait," "Love Thrives in War," etc.

Illustrated from Drawings by
Clyde O. De Land

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TO MY DEAR BROTHER

DANIEL CAMERON CROWLEY

WHO SO OFTEN HAS SMILED IN THE FACE OF DEATH
AND VANQUISHED HIM

CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
I. A MEETING AND A MAID	1
II. TO THE RESCUE	14
III. THE LADY OF THE RICHELIEU	29
IV. A HOSTAGE OF FORTUNE	41
V. ST. DENIS	53
VI. THROUGH THE FOREST	66
VII. THE TOWERS OF ST. EUSTACHE	77
VIII. TWO WOMEN	85
IX. A SHIP OF FATE	93
X. A DASHING CAVALIER	105
XI. THE SWORD UNSHEATHED	117
XII. FOR LOVE OF LIBERTY	129
XIII. A VOLUNTEER'S REWARD	141
XIV. TRAITOR OR FREE LANCE?	150
XV. THE SUPREME MOMENT	160
XVI. STRANGE JOURNEYINGS	175
XVII. THE CITADEL	185
XVIII. LOVE AND A TRAITOR	195
XIX. TROUVEUR	206

CHAPTER	PAGE
XX. NOTHING VENTURE, NOTHING HAVE . . .	226
XXI. WANDERERS	243
XXII. OFF FOR THE BORDER	260
XXIII. A DAUNTLESS DEMOISELLE	274
XXIV. TRIED AND TRUE	282
AUTHOR'S NOTE	292

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

- “ ‘You are Major Adair, the American prisoner,’
he cried in astonishment ” *Frontispiece*
- “ ‘I found myself covered by the musket of a
thick-set habitant ’ ” *Page 62*
- “ Enveloped in a sheet of flame and drifting
rapidly down the current ” “ 97
- “ ‘Phœbe,’ I said hesitatingly, ‘the captain —
are you his wife?’ ” “ 134
- “ ‘I remembered only that I loved her and she
was come to comfort me ’ ” “ 167

IN TREATY WITH HONOR

CHAPTER FIRST

A MEETING AND A MAID

IT was a clear, crisp morning at Chambly, in the Province of Quebec, and the twenty-third of October, 1837. The frosty air was more exhilarating than the wines of Champagne or the rare spirits that my good friend Dr. Nelson in those days distilled at St. Denis. The forests ablaze with crimson and gold suggested to my mind a mighty camp-fire. The tall trees were like an army of giant soldiers who bore aloft garlanded lances and the pennons of proud chevaliers. One among them there, well in the van of the splendid host, reared above all an oriflamme gorgeous as that of St. Louis, as if in sympathy with the patriots of French Canada whose enthusiasm, enkindled by the success of their neighbors south of the St. Lawrence in maintaining the independence they had won, was flaring into action.

The splendor of the woods was, however, half veiled in a soft haze, even as the future was veiled from us, so that only through a mist could we gauge the effect of the stand we were about to take.

Here at Chambly the Richelieu broadens to a deep lake clasped by the shore in a sharply marked crescent. At one point of the Diana's bow the village and the gray turrets of the church emerge from a background of foliage. At the other, on a promontory

jutting into the current, rise the fortifications established for the defence of the river in the days when the white banner of the Bourbons, with its shining golden lilies, floated over New France.

Into the wide chalice of the crescent flow the clear waters up to the edge, the long isle of St. Matthius bounding it like a jewelled rim. Still beyond, in bold outline against the horizon, each separate and apart and towering above the plain like a colossal sentinel, stand the three mountains, Rougemont, Belœil, and St. Bruno, which lend a solemn majesty to a landscape that would be otherwise only peacefully beautiful.

There was now a garrison of redcoats at the old French post. On this October morning, therefore, I, Nial Adair, made a circuit in passing it as, astride my swift pony, Feu Follet, I set out for the hamlet of St. Charles, full twenty miles distant.

The route was pleasant enough, for it followed the course of the river and led around the base of Belœil, the cloud-enveloped height that in fancy I always likened to a Titan in armor.

By reason of the recent rains, the road was so rough, nevertheless, that I was frequently forced to curb the spirit of my little mare, who, with the folly of her sex and in her eagerness to serve me, would have rushed on into difficulties, heedless of stumbling or perhaps of injury to herself, poor lass.

I had nearly reached St. Hilaire without adventure. But so turbulent was the state of the country that if a man were seen riding with speed from one village to another he might, at any moment, have his journey cut short by a band of soldiers, unless he could give a satisfactory explanation of his haste or his errand.

Since this I did not choose to do, I had just checked the pace of Feu Follet once more when, at a turn in

the road, I discovered myself face to face with two mounted men in uniform, coming from the direction toward which I rode.

Recognizing them as officers of the Royal Dragoons stationed at the fort, I saluted and was pressing on when the elder of the two called after me:

"A moment, if you please."

I drew rein immediately, though I thought I might be the next minute a prisoner.

At the instant of danger a cool bravado is often the best shield. So in this case I found it.

"I ask pardon for halting you, sir," cried the officer with pompous urbanity, "but you ride like one familiar with the locality, while we are not. We have only recently come with a body of troops from Montreal, to put down the rebellious French with cold steel, should they show any indication of rising. Can you tell us of a shorter road than this to Chambly?"

"Yes, colonel," I said, though I saw by his shoulder-straps he was only a captain. "When you have gone about a quarter of a mile farther you will see a trail through an oak grove. Take it if you will. It ought to save you much travel, but you will find the going bad."

"Our horses are well shod; we will take the trail, and many thanks to you," interrupted the younger man, putting spurs to his fine English hunter.

His companion, with a supercilious inclination of the head by way of acknowledgment, rode after him, and I was left to pursue my journey.

No doubt they supposed me to be one of the British gentry of the neighborhood. My ruddy complexion and light brown hair had proved my best disguise. The thought did not occur to them that I might be a Celt. They could not know that by edu-

cation I was a Parisian, and therefore French in feeling. Now being by adoption a citizen of the United States and imbued with the spirit of liberty, I was on my way to join hands and heart with the Canadian patriots, should they decide to meet the oppressions of Lord Gosford with armed resistance. Thus sixty years before the thirteen colonies to the south revolted against the injustice of the government of their time, and in the struggle became a nation.

"The redcoats will miss the trail and lose themselves among the fastnesses of the mountain, yet in courtesy I warned them," I laughed as I cantered on. "They do not know I am travelling to meet the men whom they would treat to their cold steel."

Clearly, they had no suspicion of what was to take place that day, almost under their *royal* noses; and in their haste to get back to their snug quarters, they were, unwittingly, blind to what might be doing down the river.

Before I had gone a mile farther I began to meet other travellers. French Canadians they were for the most part, some mounted or driving lumbering charrettes, the greater number afoot. The majority were men, but women and children trudged along also or crowded the vehicles, all in holiday attire, and all apparently bound for the same destination.

Often the habitants scrutinized me more closely than the officers had done, and with them my fair skin seemed to find disfavor.

"*Coute qui coute.*"¹ I called to them now and then with a smile.

Invariably the effect was magical.

"*Coute qui coute,*" they echoed, and nodded in joyous recognition of the chosen password.

¹ Cost what it may.

Thus we went on from village to village, the throng of wayfarers becoming continually larger, until before us, where the shore runs out into the river, we saw St. Charles, a collection of low-roofed, white-washed farmhouses. Each farm, as in the case of all the settlements on the banks of the Richelieu, had a narrow frontage on the water-highway and extended back into the fertile plain.

Another ten minutes brought me to the village Square, usually a dull spot at this hour, eleven o'clock in the forenoon, except on a market day or during a horse fair.

This morning, however, it was thronged with people.

"My word! Contrasted with the russet shades of the men's attire, the bright bodices of the older women and the gay jupes and ribbons of the little maids make the place look like a garden plot abloom with all the flowers of the rainbow amid dark patches of earth," I said to myself as the crowd parted to let me through and I rode up to the auberge or inn.

A stable boy ran out.

"Ah, m'sieur, there is much going on to-day," he said. "The lads are being driven harder than were any of the ponies now baited here. The stalls are filled."

"Still, I am sure you have a corner for my mare," I replied, as I flung him a piece of silver.

"Oh, yes, m'sieur, yes, certainly, for a gentleman who, like m'sieur, can pay handsomely."

"See that she is well fed and cared for. You will not lose by it," I added, as I dismounted and threw him the rein.

Having thus done my best for Feu Follet, I walked on to the meadow cornfield where the meeting had

been called under the guise of a husking or merry-making.

Here must have been five thousand people, and most of them were men. The farmers of the vicinity swelled the numbers, but in the gathering I saw with a thrill of exultation several French gentlemen from Montreal. There were also a few British colonists who generously sympathized with the oppressed French Canadians, fearing their turn would come next, and ardent young sieurs from the old seigneuries on the borders of the Richelieu, who, like Thomas Jefferson and John Carroll of Maryland and Virginia, loved their country better than the broad lands whose forfeiture they risked in joining the patriot's cause.

I had only reached this point of my observations when a hand was laid on my shoulder, and turning sharply, I discovered that it belonged to a gray-haired, agreeable-looking gentleman.

"Dr. Nelson," I exclaimed, warmly greeting the beloved physician and prosperous distiller of St. Denis.

"Adair, I am glad to see you," he said as cordially. "We have need of bold hearts like yours."

"And here you have thousands of them," I answered, sweeping my eyes over the crowd once more.

"Well, well, they make a brave showing," he admitted joyously. "And so does our Liberty Pole, is it not so?"

By a wave of the hand he directed my attention to the centre of the field, where had been erected a monument to which my gaze had returned many times during the last few minutes.

It was a majestic maple, brought from the forest to form the symbolic column. The lower branches had been lopped off, but its stately head was still crowned with a splendor of scarlet foliage more

imposing than was ever Phrygian cap held high on Roman lances, the ancient head-covering of the free-man desecrated in France by the revolutionists of forty years before.

It was not with any wish to emulate the license of the Reign of Terror, however, that the habitants of the counties of the Richelieu had reared aloft their Liberty Pillar with its *bonnet rouge*. They were but following the example set by their neighbors in the southern provinces a little earlier.

Some years before, when I was in Boston, I was shown a fine old elm, under which the "Liberty Boys" were wont to hold their meetings in summer, long before the fight at Lexington, and was told that a red pennon floating from its top was a signal understood by the people.

To-day in the meadow a few young people were, ostensibly, engrossed with the husking. Now and again, from among them, arose a peal of laughter, and the habitant-gallants gave lively chase as some pretty girl found a red ear of corn.

But when, following Dr. Nelson, I pushed my way to the foot of the pole, I saw, grouped about it, standards of white, green, violet, and crimson embroidered and fringed with gold. The others of ruder make were blazoned with legends such as "Fly, Gosford, Persecutor of the Canadians!" "Gosford, Robber of the Public Purse." "Liberty! We will conquer or die for her!"

I had no opportunity to read more just then. A body of armed militia, marching to the music of fife and drum, cut me off from my companion, and as they deployed around the field, the crowd drew back to make space for them.

I was not sorry for this separation, for the doctor

was leading the way to where were seated some of the most distinguished men of Lower Canada.

Though a reckless fellow, ready to do, either by peaceful means or amid the chances of war, whatever might be in my power to redress the wrongs of a country not my own, I felt it would be far easier for me to put myself forward on a skirmish field than upon the speakers' platform. Observing a coign of vantage at the edge of the crowd, where I could see and hear all that might go on, I pressed forward and gained it.

Another among the spectators had evidently been inspired by a similar thought, for a young man of about my own age reached the spot almost at the same instant.

He was a tall fellow, and he held up his handsome head with the pride and grace of a Chateauguay or a de Longueuil of the olden time. His hair was glossy and black as a partridge's wing, and as his eyes met mine I noted that they were of the color and glint of steel. His green frock-coat was buttoned tightly around his shapely figure, and a black cravat and rolling collar emphasized his resemblance to the pictures of that mad poet and exponent of revolutionary ideas, Lord Byron, whose romantic style of dress was still affected by the gallants of the day, although he himself had, some twelve years before, continued his wanderings beyond the Styx.

In fact, the appearance and manner of my new acquaintance pronounced him an aristocrat to the finger-tips.

"You are, monsieur, from a seigneurie of the neighborhood?" I said, addressing him.

He laughed gayly and answered with pleasing frankness:

"You are mistaken, sir, in thinking me a French-

man. I am only a soldier of fortune from ill-fated Poland. Lacking the opportunity to serve my native land, either in the council-hall or the army, I have sworn to devote whatever talent for peaceful agitation, or skill with the sword I may possess, to the cause of liberty the world over. Therefore, with my compatriot, Von Shultz, I have joined the French Canadians. My name is Ramon Rycerski."

"And mine Nial Adair," I said, grasping the hand he extended to me in good comradeship. "Like you, sir, I, too, am from a country that has lost its birth-right. I thank God I was born in the land of the shamrock, but I thank Him also that by adoption I belong to the freest nation of the earth. I am a citizen of the United States."

The meeting was opened by the genial Dr. Nelson. Other speakers followed, but what they said I do not remember. Throughout the throng of habitants and other listeners there was, as in my own breast, a restlessness of expectancy. It found vent at last in a great shout of joy as a handsome man of middle age, and easily of the most distinguished appearance among those who surrounded him, rose from his place and, striding to the edge of the rude rostrum, cast a commanding glance over the sea of faces upturned to him.

"À Papineau, à Papineau!" cried the hundreds before him.

My new friend, Count Rycerski, — or Ramon as I shall call him, — and I cheered, too, and as loud as any. For, with the divine ardor of youth, we were hero-worshippers, and this man was the great Louis Papineau, the statesman and matchless speaker, whose words were as honey in the mouth of the lion, the *voice* of French Canada.

"À Papineau!" acclaimed the throng again in chorus.

Surely it was a proud moment even for one well-accustomed to adulation, one who could sway according to his will not only his compatriots but many of the English.

He was above the average height of men of the Gallic race, and wore his dark wavy hair brushed back from a broad forehead. His face was intellectual, the features being regular, the mouth sensitive, and the eyes flashing. He looked, indeed, the ideal orator as he stood motionless, awaiting a cessation of the clamor.

Through the crowd ran the warning, —

"Hush!"

"*Tais toi!*"

"*Fi donc.* Do you not see? He cannot speak for the hubbub!"

When silence was restored, for a second he looked up at the serene blue skies, wherein floated a white cloud apparently no larger than a man's hand. Then, as he stretched forth his arms toward the people, his voice rang musical and vibrant as the notes of a silver trumpet.

Would that I could recall word for word the magnetic appeal! His genius soared above passing events. Pointing out to the brave men before him the road to freedom, he promised to guide them on the way, and swore to conquer or die as their leader.

When he ceased to speak, few of the men in the great gathering were dry-eyed. Yet the tears that coursed down their bearded cheeks were the tears of heroes whose hearts were stirred and nerved to deeds of sacrifice and valor.

The women in the throng wept unrestrainedly, and

many, falling upon their knees, prayed God to bless the patriot cause. Cheer after cheer rent the clear October air, and a little cannon added its thunder to the tumult of applause.

Next was read a French Canadian Declaration of Independence, after the model drawn up by the Congress of Philadelphia, each clause being greeted with a volley of musketry, the waving of banners, and renewed shouts, as over a victory already achieved.

Almost beside themselves with enthusiasm, the people surrounded Papineau, the idol of the hour, and hailed him as their would-be deliverer. As they passed the Liberty Pole, each man saluted it. Ramon and I, pressing on with the rest, paid our respects to the great man.

Presently reaching the column, we paused, and the exiled aristocrat, laying his strong hand, that yet was white and blue-veined as a woman's, upon the rough wood of the tree said simply, "My life, my fortune, and my sacred honor I pledge to the patriots' struggle; I will follow its leaders to victory or death."

After him I took the same vow. Then, clasping hands anew, we pledged eternal friendship to each other.

Ah, my comrade, how well you kept both vow and pledge! God knows I, too, tried to be true to the promise to Canada and to you which I there made. But on that day, after this brief moment of solemnity, we cheered like boys. And falling in with the procession of hardy habitants, that moved on with banners waving in the breeze, we sang, to words suited to the occasion, martial airs heard in New France in the days of Louis, the Sun-King, ending with the lively mocking "Malbrouck," ever a favorite chanson.

“ Malbrouck s'en va-t-en guerre ;
Mironton-ton, miron-tai-ne.
Malbrouck s'en va-t-en guerre
Ne sait quand reviendra ?
• • • •

“ J'n'en dis pas davantage,
Mironton-tonton, miron-tai-ne
J'n'en dis pas davantage, —
Car en voila z'assez
Car en voila z'assez.
Mironton-tonton, miron-tai-ne ! ”

As we marched around the meadow, my gaze turned to the balcony of a house on the outskirts, to which indeed it had strayed more than once, even during the impassioned address of Monsieur Papi-neau. Several times, too, I had caught the eyes of Ramon wandering in the same direction. For there, in company with a comely matron, stood a young girl who, from across the field at least, appeared a beauty before whose charms, I felt sure, the traditional fascination of the diabolical Angélique de Meloise or the loveliness of Barbe of Chateauguay would have paled.

What more natural than that, as we approached the little gallery and I waved aloft a pennon which some one had put into my hand, I should stare upward to see if, at nearer view, the lady was as fair as she appeared from a distance.

My new friend, also, looked straight up at her.

Yes, she was even lovelier now and would appear fairer still to me, I thought, if I could but linger there beside her.

Perhaps the same idea occurred to my comrade.

The girl was lithe as a fawn of the Canadian forest. Her frock was of a creamy-white woollen stuff fastened at the throat by a knot of blue ribbon. Her

dark hair hung in soft curls upon her shoulders, and on her graceful head was perched a coquettish little white cap.

As we came nearer, she leaned over the railing. So close were we to her that, had either Ramon or I but dared, one of us might have clasped the small, daintily shod foot thrust halfway between the palings of the balustrade.

But who will stop to admire a lady's foot, however pretty it may be, when he may look into her face? Certainly neither he nor I did that day. She thought us not overbold, either, for she smiled as I lowered my flag and Ramon gave her a soldier's salute.

At this attention she drew back, nevertheless, and a wave of color swept over her sweet face. Then as quickly, her mood changed, her laughing eyes lit up with a spirit of naïve and girlish coquetry, and catching the knot of ribbon from her neck, she flung it down. As she did this, she looked at me, but it was to my comrade she threw the ribbon.

The pleasantry, coy as it was, made me think of the times when as a sportsman I have brought down two birds at once. Truly, seldom have I seen a neater shot. Where do women learn the charm that draws us like a talisman?

Ramon, without a word, thrust the bright bit of silk into the breast of his coat; while I, also silent now, kept pace with him and fluttered my banderole. Was it possible that already had come the first test of our newly sworn friendship?

CHAPTER SECOND

TO THE RESCUE

AS Ramon and I had agreed to join fortunes, he returned with me to Chambly and shared my lodging at the house of Toussaint Terault, the village barber and oracle.

During these stirring days Terault was in his element. When he strove to be witty the result was prosy enough, but my comrade and I found abundant food for mirth in the barber's serious outbursts of patriotism. He was diminutive in stature, a wiry French Canadian, and, like most individuals similarly situated, bold as a lion and loquacious as a parrot abroad, but meek as a lamb and discreetly silent in the presence of his large and comely wife, who, report said, was the better man of the two. In fact the sign over the shop read boldly, "Louisonne and Toussaint Terault."

This so pleased the fancy of Count Rycerski that, one evening about a fortnight after he came to live with me, he questioned Terault about it. The time was after nine by the clock, and we stood at the house door. The little man was, ostensibly, about to close his shop.

"Oh, m'sieur," he replied volubly, "the sign, does it not tell its own story? Louisonne inherits money from her father and she sets me up in business. I make no money, I have a soul above money, m'sieurs. Louisonne she steps in and takes hold, not of the shop

but of the till. Ma parole, if the patriots win and the French are free to govern themselves, they could not do better than make Louisonne keeper of the treasury. I am a man of noble sentiments, m'sieurs, so when Jean le Berr the painter makes my sign, I tell him to put Louisonne's name in front. She holds the business up; therefore she is the head of it. The neighbors say this is right. What thinks m'sieur?"

"You are a generous man, Terault," said Ramon noncommittally.

Terault beamed with pleasure.

"Louisonne is a woman of influence in the village, m'sieurs, and a born talker," he went on. "Once old Jean le Berr, who is also the school-master, put a punishment upon our little boy, who is, of course, called for his mother — caned our *'tit* Louison, just for his natural badness. M'sieurs, my wrath was aroused, and when in a rage I am a dangerous man. Jean le Berr is twice my size, but I took a terrible vow, and kept it too — may I be forgiven for the same."

"By my own sword, what did you do?" I cried, in pretended dismay.

"M'sieurs," returned Toussaint, bending toward us and putting a hand before his lips, that his whisper might not penetrate into the interior of the neat thatched-roofed cottage, "I wrote Jean le Berr a note and gave him Hail Columbia, as they say in the States, M'sieur Adair — ha! ha! I told him things so hot they all but burned the paper, and also, m'sieurs, to frighten him still more, to the letter I signed the name of Louisonne. As plain as I could I wrote it, — Louisonne Terault. Since then my *'tit* Louison he goes without punishment. Louisonne she could make one dozen men as big as Jean le Berr

to quail before her. Ah, m'sieurs, it is a great blessing to have a valiant wife. Louisonne says to-day to our little son, 'Louison, I wish you to be good.' And Louison, he says, '*Maman*, if I am good, what will you give me?' He has his mother's head for finance, m'sieurs. But Louisonne answers stern like a grenadier, 'Louison, it is for you to remember you cannot be a child of mine unless you are good for nothings.'"

Having with a twinkling eye unburdened himself of this speech, Toussaint withdrew.

For a while my friend and I continued our former conversation, which turned to the hopes of the patriots and various military matters.

"Toussaint, what is the difference between a fort and a fortress?" Ramon abruptly called within to his host.

The merry barber promptly poked his head out of the shop again.

"M'sieurs," he said suavely, "since the fortress is of the gender feminine, I think it will hold out the longer. Parbleu! It will be easier to silence a fort."

"Well said!" I cried, while Ramon could not speak for laughing. "You are evidently a man of experience, Toussaint; you will make a good soldier."

With this parting thrust at Terault, I set out with my comrade for a stroll through the village, whence we sauntered on into the open country. We had been gone more than an hour when we heard a voice hallooing. Retracing our steps we soon came in sight of the belligerent barber, who was running toward us.

"M'sieurs," he called out, when at last he reached us, short of breath, "a messenger brings news from

St. John that two patriots, M'sieurs Desmarais and Davignon have been dragged out of their beds, one may say, by a band of redcoats, and are to be carried through Chambly to the prison at Montreal."

We lost no time in getting back to the village Square, where the people were, by this, gathered, the men having hastily armed themselves with clubs and farm implements. It was nearly midnight.

"The very air is charged with excitement, as before a storm of hail and lightning," cried Ramon.

"Yes," I answered, "I hope the villagers will act promptly when the time comes."

Toussaint, having mounted a chair brought from the tavern, was haranguing the crowd. He was interrupted by the strains of distant martial music.

"The soldiers! the soldiers!" shouted some one.

A silence of suspense fell upon us all.

Every moment the sounds grew louder, and before long we saw waving lights down beyond Chambly Canton. The blustering soldiers, elated by their raid upon a settlement just going to rest, were approaching with their prisoners.

Soon they came into view, a mounted troop, and at their head, as I saw by the light of their torches, rode the older of the two officers whom I encountered on the day I went down to the husking at St. Charles. They kept close together, forming an impenetrable wall around an open charette, wherein, upon a heap of straw, were seated the unfortunate captives.

"And the cart is driven by a renegade Frenchman," I muttered, my heart burning within me.

An ominous murmur ran through the waiting throng.

"*À bas*, Malo, the traitor!"

"Courage, patriots."

"No harm shall come to you."

Such were the shouts that came from every direction.

Others of the habitants, brandishing sticks and pikes, jeered at the soldiers in a chorus of curses.

"*Sacré! À bas Gosford!*"

But how could this startled band of farmers, a few men all told, hope to wrest their compatriots from the military who rode with pistols in their hands?

Overawed by the blare of the brass band, the parade of armed authority, and confused by the voice of the great drum and the flashing of the torches, the people, though they clamored and protested, were yet driven back, those who resisted being ruthlessly ridden down in the road. Thus the troop of cavalry swept imperiously and relentlessly onward until, in the distance, the night closed around them, and even the gleam of their torches was lost amid the darkness, and the strains of their warlike music died upon the breeze.

The women and children of our little community had hidden themselves in affright at their first glimpse of the armed soldiery, even the valiant Louisonne, wife of Toussaint, having, evidently, deemed "discretion the better part of valor." Now the men slunk away, ashamed that, despite their brave words of an hour earlier, they had let the cavalcade pass without making an attempt to free their neighbors of St. John, who were being hurried on, probably to an ignoble death.

Ramon and I did not return to the house of the barber.

"To the rescue," he said in a low tone.

"To the rescue," I repeated as firmly.

Going to the stable of the inn we made ready our mounts and set off by a circuitous route through the

woods toward Longueil, the direction taken by the dragoons.

While we were in the bush I felt Feu Follet start and quiver, and I knew she heard some sound that had not reached me. Her agitation quickly communicated itself to Rycerski's strong pony and, presently, to our ears came the notes of the music of the band.

"Here they are," I exclaimed, gritting my teeth.

"Now for it," Ramon replied, his enthusiasm rising.

We sprang from our saddles. Ramon, selecting, as well as he could by the dim light of the stars, a place of pasturage, staked his pony where it could crop the moist grass and tender vines. I followed his example, though I had no need to be so cautious. "Steady, my pretty one," I whispered in the ear of Feu Follet, and the word was enough. Such is the difference in the nature of horses, some being, like my Feu Follet, patient as a woman when a man is anxious or in trouble, while others are gourmets, to be appealed to only through the feast spread before them.

Having thus secured them in the most secluded part of the wood, we pushed on through the underbrush until we came to the edge of the road by which the cavalcade must pass. It was still and shadowy.

"This would make a pleasant sleeping-place," said Ramon, "but I wish all these trees were patriots with muskets in their hands."

The music grew louder, and before long we saw the waving lights and the procession once more.

"Ha, ha! the dragoons are hilarious and noisy," I ejaculated. "Since no rescue has been attempted, they hope to be in Montreal by daylight."

Lying prone upon the ground where the tangle of vines was thickest, we awaited their nearer approach.

"The prisoners look as if they had abandoned all hope," sighed Ramon.

They were followed by a small band of habitants armed with pikes and cudgels. Nevertheless, as my eyes swept over the troop, I felt the chance for a rescue was as one in a thousand.

"Yet that chance I am resolved to take," I said to myself. "Ramon will do something desperate if I am not beforehand with him, and in positions of either honor or danger we must be at least abreast."

When the redcoats were almost opposite to us, an impulse came to me. Near where we were, a tree had been felled, and chips from the woodman's axe lay among the withered leaves.

Picking up one of these bits of wood I sent it spinning into the middle of the shadowed highway.

Immediately the captain's mount plunged, reared, and started down the road at a mad gallop. Those of the other officers, frightened by its antics, dashed after the runaway, despite the efforts of their riders to curb them. The panic spread, and there ensued a few seconds of wild confusion, during which the charette remained unguarded. It was the golden opportunity.

Leaping into the road I seized the bridles of the horses that drew the cart, and boldly cried to the driver:

"Stop! *Arrête-toi*, Jacques St. Malo, or the next moment will be your last."

For answer he made a cut at me with his whip. I sprang to one side, and though a pistol-shot cleft the air, I was untouched, and held on until I brought the beasts to a halt.

In the meantime Ramon made a dash at the cart. Happily for us, as well as for themselves, the

prisoners were ironed only at the wrists. As my comrade opened a way for them, they jumped from the vehicle, while the habitants, stimulated by our audacity, rushed in and out among the frightened horses of the dragoons; or running into the woods came forth at some point farther along the road.

With the swiftness of desperation the released prisoners made for the heart of the forest, whither we followed them amid a hot fire from the redcoats.

Catching up with the fugitives, we directed their flight toward the place where we had left our horses. Here we found Feu Follet and Le Soleil tranquilly grazing.

"Take my mare and get away at once," I said to one of the men. "If you can restore her to me, well and good; if not, I shall be content if she serves to save a patriot's life."

"And you are equally welcome to my horse," said Ramon to the other.

Both of the hunted men tried to thank us, but the one to whom I had spoken cried:

"No, no, good friends, we cannot take your mounts. If we do, you in turn will fall into the hands of the soldiers, and your plight will be worse than ours."

"Yes. It was brave of you to rescue us, but we cannot abandon you to the consequences of your noble folly," said his companion.

"Messieurs," I replied, "if you do not take the horses we will turn them loose."

It was all done in great haste. Anon we forced the gentlemen to the saddles. Then I caught up a stick and, though my heart bled that my leave-taking with Feu Follet should be in this manner, I struck her a stinging blow which sent her off like a shot, and the pony galloped after her.

When those whom we had rescued were gone, we crouched in the underbrush.

"I'll wager what you please that we shall be captured within half an hour," said Ramon, as gayly as if he were betting on the speed of *Le Soleil*.

"It is a foregone conclusion," I admitted as carelessly.

By the time the dragoons got their beasts under control, however, manifestly concluding that the woods were filled with patriots armed to the teeth, they made good use of their spurs and rode madly toward Montreal.

As for us, during several nights we walked on, following the course of the river until we were in the very heart of the disaffected country. By day we slept, for we had only to knock at a farmhouse door, and as soon as we uttered the enigmatical phrase "*coute qui coute*," the habitants gave us food and shelter. It was martial law in the district, and we dared not travel fast.

Soon after dawn one morning we came out of the woods near St. Denis, and directed our way to the home of Dr. Nelson on the river bank, a comfortable manor overgrown with vines that now, in their autumnal foliage, hung like gay banners upon it.

At the sound of our footsteps on the walk a great tawny dog, a collie with perhaps a strain of the Newfoundland in his blood, sprang out at us with a fierce growl, and showed his teeth ominously. Another moment and he would have been upon us, had not Ramon called out to the brute in French:

"Halt, you dunce, would you attack a patriot?"

The effect was magical. If the dog did not know the meaning of the words, he recognized the language as that of his master's friends, and though he leaped

upon us, it was now in an exuberant greeting. As I rapped lightly on the door, in the manner arranged by the patriots as a signal, he stood beside me panting and assuring us by every means in his power that we should meet with a cordial welcome.

The knock brought the kind doctor himself to admit us without delay, and he promptly made good the promise of his canine guard.

"Trouveur has welcomed you, I see," said he. "Do not think me lacking in hospitality because I lodge you in the distillery; you will be safer there."

As he led the way, we told him in hurried whispers of the skirmish at the edge of the wood, the escape of Davignon and Desmarais, and our hope that by this time they had crossed the border into the State of Vermont, and were thus beyond the reach of pursuit.

"Gentlemen, you have played the part of heroes, and you have certainly raised the *de'il*," he said with a laugh, as we concluded our story.

Yet the warmth with which he pressed our hands told us of his appreciation of what we had tried to do.

When we entered the distillery, after carefully bolting the door, he, conducting us to the room used as an office, brought out decanters and a loaf of bread from a cupboard, and setting glasses for us, bade us help ourselves.

"I lunch here sometimes," he said.

As we were nearly famished, we needed no second invitation, but fell to at once. Never up to that time had I known bread to taste sweeter, nor found the famous elixir of St. Denis so beneficial as I did then in my exhaustion. But for this refreshment, too, I think Ramon would have fallen upon the floor from the weakness of fatigue and hunger.

After we were strengthened by the food and drink,

our host, pushing out his high secretary or writing-desk from its place, slid back a board in the wainscot and disclosed a narrow passage between the inner and exterior walls.

I had often read of secret passages, and sceptically regarded them as the accessories of melodramatic romance. I was now to learn that such corridors were not infrequent among the buildings of an old French-Canadian estate. They usually gave entrance to some chamber where, in the days of Indian visitations, the family might remain in comparative security during the raids of hostile red men.

Few among the English of this time knew of the existence of these former hiding-places. When Dr. Nelson lit a candle and beckoned us, we unhesitatingly followed him through the opening, along the narrow space, and down a flight of stone stairs into a small, underground room.

"Wait here a moment," said our friend, thrusting the candle into a rude sconce on the wall.

Groping his way back over the steps, he returned straightway, carrying a buffalo skin and a pair of blankets.

"These will make you a couch for the present," he said. "Later you shall be provided with a better one. Sleep now without anxiety. When you have rested, we will decide what seems best for us to do. Pardon me; for your greater security I will take away the candle."

When he was gone my comrade and I, throwing off our coats, rolled them up as pillows, cast ourselves prone on the skin which our host had spread on the floor, and each having wrapped himself in a blanket, we were soon continuing our adventures in the land of dreams.

They were long drawn out, for it must have been well into the afternoon when, rubbing my eyes, I sat up. Ramon was still asleep.

The place appeared dark when the doctor took away the tallow dip, but now there was sufficient light for me to see, what I had barely noticed before, that around the walls were ranged casks of many sizes. It was, indeed, the cellar where were stored the choicest liqueurs of the distillery and the best wines from the St. Denis vineyards. I had not marvelled previously that the room was so well ventilated and free from dampness, but now a realization of the fact that it was also faintly lighted, though windowless, stirred my curiosity. Getting upon my feet I stumbled around among the casks which bordered the walks that, winding and turning in every direction like the passages of a catacomb, showed me at last a sunbeam shining in the distance.

At the same time I felt blowing upon my face a current of air, which could only come from some opening into the outside world.

All at once the truth broke upon me, and again I felt as if I were enacting an unfamiliar rôle in some drama of adventure, either in the complex life of European civilization, or of strange, new lands, far from the prosaic and dull existence of a village on the Richelieu.

Yet, after all, it was not singular that the little chamber where we were lodged should be connected with a natural cave. At all events, such was the case, and, moreover, the opening, away off where I saw the gleam of daylight, was, I felt sure, directly upon the river.

Honorable as was the master of the distillery, I suspected that, considering how the French were cheated

out of their rights by the officials of the Family Compact, he thought it no wrong to send away some of his goods without being so punctilious as to ask permission of the excise officers.

“Nial! Nial!”

My name, uttered softly, was repeated along the rocky walls of the passage as though spoken by men posted at intervals on the way, or else by weird guardians of the place.

After a moment, however, I realized that the sounds were but the echoes of Ramon's voice calling to me.

Abandoning the idea of pursuing my investigations, I returned to the cellar and found him groping about also.

I promptly told him of my discovery.

“The good doctor has brought us here, not only because it is an excellent place of concealment, but in order to afford us an opportunity of escape if we are tracked to this house,” he said gratefully. “Heigh-ho, but it is a dull hole nevertheless. Except that there is a way to get out, one might as well be in a prison. If one had but a pack of cards to while away the time!”

“Phouf! There would not be light enough to see the knave of hearts from the king of diamonds,” I reminded him.

“Well, a chessboard and pieces; one might tell their position by the sense of touch,” he persisted.

“You will have to forego both cards and chess, but possibly I can furnish you with some amusement, provided that, after all, we have some matches,” said I inconsequently, as I drew a few dominos from my pockets.

Searching his, Ramon discovered several lucifers, and every time we struck one we attempted to pair

the dominos, or failing in this, invented new combinations.

"We are wasting matches that we may greatly need later to find the mouth of the cave," I said after a few minutes. "If we attempt an escape it must be by night."

"Then we will play no more."

Having thus decided, Ramon, lying on the pelt, clasped his hands behind his head and yawned prodigiously for very ennui, while I, sitting astride a wine cask, took to thinking of the future and idly wondering what fortunes, good or bad, it might bring us.

"*Ma foi*, it is a long time since we breakfasted on bread and wine," cried my companion at last. "For want of something better to do, I will see how the river looks at the mouth of the cave."

Before he stirred to put his words into action, a faint rustle attracted our attention. It seemed to come from above our heads, and at its repetition we both sprang to our feet.

"Dr. Nelson is coming," I exclaimed.

"Or it may be a spy, creeping to learn where we are and cause our arrest," muttered Rycerski, as he drew from the breast of his coat an object that caught and reflected the faint light of the room. I could just see that it was a dagger he had shown me once, a keen blade whose handle was of silver set with jewels.

I myself was unarmed save for a large pocket-knife, which in emergency might serve as a weapon of defence.

Yes, there was some one in the hidden passage, and now, too, a glimmer, as from the flame of a candle or sperm-oil lamp flickered along the wall, coming nearer and nearer.

"It is not the doctor," whispered my comrade. "I have known enough of the intrigues of courts and army circles to recognize a man's footfall when once I have heard it. Who can this be but a spy, a boy, perhaps? No — Great Heaven! it is the step of a woman."

CHAPTER THIRD

THE LADY OF THE RICHELIEU

HARDLY had Ramon spoken these last words when a flood of light burst upon us, and turning toward it we each uttered an ejaculation of surprise. For on the stair stood a young girl who, in her white frock, might have been taken for a vision of the saintly queen, Elizabeth of Hungary, who in her charity was wont to steal away from the pleasures of the court to bring consolation and food to those in need of her bounty.

In one hand the gracious visitant to our dungeon grasped a basket, while with the other she held high a lantern whose rays, to my fancy, formed a kind of halo around her head.

Another moment and, I half believe, in our dazed fascination we would have knelt to her, as to an apparition, as she paused and peered down into the dimness of the room.

But at sight of our faces, whereon our astonishment and incredulity must have been plainly depicted, she broke into a low, musical laugh, that had nothing supernatural about it, but was more charming than the notes of the thrush of the Canadian woods.

“Gentlemen, I am not a ghost; there are no spirits here but those imprisoned in the casks,” she cried gayly, stepping slowly and daintily, and looking not at the stair but at us.

It was now that my comrade showed the ready self-possession of his high breeding.

"Mademoiselle, permit me," he said, and therewith he relieved her of the basket, while I stood staring like a lout.

"Thank you," she answered, rewarding him with a smile that made the hot blood rush to my face for jealousy.

"And now, if you, sir, will take the lantern, I think I can get down," she added, turning to me.

Nothing would please Ramon, however, but to hand her down, and this he did with the air of a courtier attending upon a princess.

She stood between us, smiling again, now at one now at the other, with the naïve frankness of a child who has successfully carried out a daring escapade.

Her smiles went to my head, as if I had tasted of the ardent spirits that lay in the cave. For she was the same beautiful girl whom we had seen on the balcony at the meeting around the liberty pole, the charming coquette who had roguishly tossed the bit of ribbon to Ramon. At the same time her bright glance had shot through my heart like an arrow, inflicting a wound from which, my inner consciousness told me, I should never recover, and causing a strange pain that yet I would not have missed for all the world.

"Gentlemen, I have brought you your dinner," she said, in a cordial, matter-of-fact tone before which I found my diffidence disappearing, like hoar frost before the sunlit breeze.

Picking up the basket, that my friend had put upon the floor, she took from it a square of spotless damask. This she threw over one of the casks, making of the latter a little table, whereon she proceeded to

set forth silver plate, two or three pieces of china, a salad, and some comfits. In spite of his gallantry, Ramon cast a rueful look at the display, which, although well suited in daintiness for a lady's luncheon, was rather meagre fare for hungry men.

The sprightly witch intercepted the glance, and it appeared to amuse her mightily.

Clapping her hands together and bending toward him with a laugh, she cried, "Ah, you poor gentleman, do not think this is all. My uncle is bringing the substantial part of the meal. But this village is so dull, more's the pity to have two cavaliers locked up in my uncle's wine cellar, is n't it? And in my impatience to see if the refugees hidden here were as young and handsome as he told me, I ran away from him."

Unluckily, or perhaps I should say luckily, for us, this delightful girl did not confide to us the result of her quick, birdlike observations; for now the voice of the doctor was heard in the passage, calling cautiously, "Jacquette, Jacquette, are you there?"

Instead of answering, the young lady caught up the lantern and swung it like a signal, so that its light flashed upward.

Dr. Nelson understood, and in a few moments he also appeared, carrying a still larger basket.

"Jacquette, *ma'tite chou*, how shall I punish you for stealing a march upon me!" he cried. "Gentlemen, you will forgive me for confiding to my niece the fact of your presence here. It was necessary, in order that she might spirit away the food without attracting the attention of the servants. Jacquette is indeed a wonderful girl. I — yes — I really believe she can even keep a secret."

"I am sure she will never betray a friend," said

Ramon, as he bowed low to her with courtly grace. "Mademoiselle, our lives are safe in your hands."

"Safer than your hearts would be, young men," said the genial master of the place, sotto voce, as he brought from a locker in a recess a bottle of his choicest wine, while the girl disposed the various dishes upon the improvised table.

Having finished her self-imposed task, she bestowed upon us another of her radiant smiles, and flitted away up the stair.

During the time she was in the room it had seemed bright as a banquet hall, but now I noticed how dim was the light of the lantern. However, at the doctor's urging, we did full justice to the repast so temptingly put before us by the pretty hands of his fascinating niece. In fact it seemed to me like an ambrosial feast.

Meanwhile our host talked with us of pleasant, impersonal matters. But when we had dined, his conversation took a more serious turn.

"My friends," he began, "a half-breed runner has brought me word that the doughty soldiers whom you routed, reported, on their return to the city, that the whole district of the Richelieu has risen in rebellion. A large detachment of troops is already on its way up the côte with orders to put down our poor habitants with the sword. As their early aim will be to institute a more thorough search for you than has so far been made, I fear you will not long be safe here. Since the first duty of hospitality is the protection of one's guests, I have planned to send you to a more secure retreat."

Notwithstanding the gravity of our situation, at this juncture the rustle of a woman's gown sent Ramon's eyes and mine wandering again to the stairs. Per-

haps he felt only a passing interest and curiosity, but my own heart beat faster when we saw once more the charming vision of the young girl, as she returned and stood beside the doctor.

"Yes, gentlemen," she said eagerly, as he concluded his advice, and while she spoke her lithe form became alert and her beautiful eyes shone with animation, "all the arrangements have been made for your departure, sorry as we shall be to miss the pleasure of your company. Possibly you have already discovered that the cave communicates with the river? When you no longer see the gleam of daylight at the end of this passage, you will know the dusk has come. Wait for two or three hours after dark, and then, taking the lantern to guide you, make your way to the opening of the cave. In the bushes you will find a canoe with paddles, and provisions for a two days' journey. By this means you may escape the spies who infest every part of this neighborhood to watch for you. Push boldly out into the middle of the current, and thus paddling on, you may go up the river to St. Charles. From there the habitants will help you onward, and following the course of the Yamaska to the eastern townships, you may take the by-roads and the woods until you reach the boundary line and cross into Vermont."

"Ha, ha, ha," chuckled Dr. Nelson, pleased at her earnestness, and not a little proud of her clever management. "Jacquette has arranged all the details of the plan, you see, my friends. You have only to trust yourselves to her guidance, and obey her, as knights of old gave chivalrous heed to the lightest command of a lady."

The mysterious current of sympathy by which mind speaks to mind without the medium of words

was strong from the first between my comrade and myself. So now, I not only saw my own admiration for the spirit of the girl reflected in his glance, but I became aware of the resolution he had made on the spur of the moment, as well as I knew what I myself intended to do. "Mademoiselle," I answered, for, after a swift appeal to him, her eyes rested on me as she ceased to speak, — "Mademoiselle, I can never forget your great kindness. Believe me, I am as grateful for it as if I were already saved from prison by the means you have devised with such care; as if I were at this moment living, secure against pursuit, somewhere in the States. Nevertheless —"

"What, monsieur, you hesitate?" she exclaimed, as a little frown of puzzled surprise gathered upon her white brow.

"Mademoiselle, I too thank you with all my heart," said Ramon.

Making bold to take her hand, the audacious fellow raised it to his lips, and added, "The remembrance of this moment will always be dear to me, — but —"

"Uncle, they will not go," she broke out in incredulous dismay and anxiety. "Tell them they *must* go. Are you not named commander of the patriot forces in this district? Order them to go, sir."

Our friend smiled at her ardor, yet even while the smile lingered on his lips he sighed.

"How can I order my guests to leave my home, Jacquette?" he protested, with something of sadness. "Moreover, we cannot surely say that the manner by which we hoped to secure their escape might not prove the luckless chance that would deliver them over to the redcoats. They must choose their own course. Gentlemen, my house and this room, known

only to one trusted person besides Jacquette and myself, are at your disposal. The longer you remain with us, the more pleased we shall be to have your society; but if you wish to go, to-night will be your last opportunity. Already the habitants of the neighborhood are leaving their own houses and seeking shelter here on my farm. I am fortifying this distillery and the outbuildings. By to-morrow we shall probably find ourselves besieged by the authorities, and then you will not be able to get off."

"Do you think this is the time for soldiers to run away, sir?" I said humorously, and turned to the lady.

But the doctor replied in all seriousness.

"Tut, tut! At the worst we shall only get a beating for defending our property," he insisted; "but if you are apprehended, young men, I am afraid it will go hard with you. Remember, you have taken two prisoners out of the very hands of the law. You have not only sympathized with those who are regarded as traitors because they love their country, but, in your bold rescue of the patriots, you have committed an act that will surely be construed as treason, and —"

"Oh, gentlemen, go I beg of you," cried Jacquette, clasping her hands beseechingly and fixing her luminous eyes in eloquent pleading now on Ramon and again upon me. "Think of the good you can do in the States for the cause! If you remain here to fight, there will be but two of you; if you go you may call thousands to our aid. Go, sir," she added, appealing directly to me, "tell your countrymen we French of Canada wish to be free, and surely they will come and help us."

"Mademoiselle, I wish *you* could tell them," I broke out; for in her enthusiasm she seemed, herself, the im-

personation of the fair spirit of liberty. "Sometime, indeed, I hope to stir the hearts of the Americans as you ask, but now, I thank Heaven, my duty lies not so far away. When this place is in danger of attack, it would ill become us to go paddling up the river, or yet to lurk here in the cellar."

"Yes, Dr. Nelson," interposed Ramon. "We have counted the cost of the little we have been able to do for the cause so far, or what may be allotted for us to do in the future. If the patriots are to make their first stand here, we demand of you the honor of being assigned to guard some position."

"Give us any post so there may be fighting in it," I urged impetuously.

"My sons, I wish the Patriot Cause had a hundred thousand soldiers like you," declared the doctor, much moved. "Yet, like Jacquette, I would sooner see you go than have you stay. No, I will not bring you into the house now. Consider the matter well; on reflection you may see it will be better to take the canoe and make your escape to-night. If you do, this lady and I will, for your sakes, be glad in the morning to find that you have gone. Come, Jacquette, my dear."

Jacquette swept us a charming courtesy.

"Adieu, messieurs," she said gravely, as if uttering a prayer.

Ramon and I bowed low.

"Let it rather be *au revoir*, mademoiselle," I cried, to let her know my resolution was unshaken.

But Ramon, looking deep into her beautiful eyes, said, with a hand upon his heart:

"*À demain*, mademoiselle. We meet again, to-morrow."

"My word, is she not charming? And what a

spirit she has too," exclaimed my comrade, when our host and his captivating charge had vanished up the stair and we heard the sliding door behind the secretary closed softly behind them. "I fancy so must have looked my fair countrywoman, the little Countess Potocka, over whose portrait all Europe has raved."

"Heroism like hers belongs not to the old world but to the new," I said somewhat curtly. "It is not only the courage inherited from stout-hearted ancestors, but a fearlessness that is as the breath of life here in our Canadian forests and upon the shores of our broad rivers. I have heard that years ago the doctor's sister married a seigneur of the Richelieu. Mademoiselle is a daughter of the chevaliers."

"Ha, ha, Nial," Ramon laughed banteringly, "you read the little beauty marvellously well during one brief interview. But I'll wager she made good use of the moments too. Her glance as she turned it on you said as plain as day, '*Ma foi*, but this is a pleasing young gentleman. His erect form, broad shoulders, and soldierly bearing are quite to my mind. I like the poise of his head, too; his wavy hair of the color of the hazel-nut, his fair skin, and the flush of red in his cheek. His frank smile shows me the necessity of holding my heart fast by its wings, lest presently it may fly away from me like a bird. His eyes are a little too serious, yet I more than half believe they could be tender as well.'"

"Ramon, do not mock me," I cried. "A fellow cannot help his outward showing, yet he does not wish to be held up to ridicule."

"Truly! I mean no mockery at all," averred the gay tormentor. "Not being blind, I can see when good looks and a winning personality are a passport

to a lady's favor. But now, since our visitors have gone, I may as well set out upon the explorations their coming delayed."

He began to make his way among the casks toward the glimmer of daylight that marked the opening of the cave.

"If you have decided to avail yourself of the means of escape so skilfully provided by the lady, wait, at least, until twilight," I said warningly.

"Do you so misunderstand me? Adair, I would not go now for all the world except upon some soldier duty," he cried, stopping short and flaring up in momentary anger. "Thank Heaven, honor keeps me here. Though you are so indifferent, I would risk everything else for the chance of seeing her to-morrow."

"Phouf! so the wind blows," I soliloquized, while, I suppose, my brows gathered into a frown, for Rycerski suddenly laughed.

"My word, you look like a thundercloud, Nial," he exclaimed. "But spare your indignation. Do you know me so little as to think I could desert you? Have you not left in you enough of the love of adventure to want to see what the river exit from this place is like? Then, too, before one is besieged, is it not well to become acquainted with the character of every loophole toward which one may, in case of need, lead others to safety as well as secure it for oneself? But you are right; we will wait a while."

The generous fellow did not divine the true cause of my ill-humor. He did not know that, despite what he was pleased to call my indifference, I wished him well out of the way in some secure place. For I too had begun to look forward with no little ardor to meeting Mademoiselle Jacqueline the next day, and I

was already so much in love as to wish to have her smiles and her pretty words all to myself.

Throwing himself upon the buffalo pelt, Ramon either slept or pretended to sleep. But I, seated on a blanket and leaning comfortably against a cask, abandoned myself to the power of many fancies, "the bright banditti" of delightful daydreams that steal away our time and saner thoughts.

After a while his heavy breathing assured me he had sunk into a genuine slumber. It must have been dark outside in the open air when he awoke, for the gleam of light was gone from the mouth of the cave.

Pulling himself together sufficiently to realize that we were still in the underground room, he was eager as before to explore the passage. Setting our lantern on a shelf, therefore, that since we dared not take it with us we might yet be lighted by its rays, we groped our way cautiously, and with no little difficulty, toward the spot where we had seen the daylight.

As we advanced the roof of the passage grew lower, and finally, from scrambling onward in a stooping posture, we had to creep on our hands and knees. I had insisted upon going in advance. Ramon was so rash, I feared, if some spy of the redcoats should be lurking outside, he would spring out and throttle him without a thought that it is sometimes wiser to retreat before an enemy than to plunge forward to a vain self-destruction. As I have said, he and I were of about the same age, yet I already felt toward him like an older brother whose care it should be to protect him from the needless peril he brought upon himself by his own bravery. Being ahead of him, accordingly, all at once I uttered an exclamation in an undertone and stopped short.

"What is it?" he asked, impatient at being halted.

"Look!" said I.

He peered over my shoulder and saw the objects at which I stared, — two sparks of fire near the entrance of the cave, and close to the ground like ourselves.

CHAPTER FOURTH

A HOSTAGE OF FORTUNE

"THE eyes of a wolf! And I dropped my dagger on the floor of the cellar and forgot to pick it up," muttered Ramon.

"Possibly a lynx has chosen the cave for his lair; a wolf loves the woods better than a hole in the ground," I responded. "I have my knife, and if we cannot drive the creature away, we together can grapple with it."

We kept on, therefore, since to turn about and retrace our path would not only evince a lack of courage but give the wild creature an opportunity to fasten its fangs upon us. Always face your enemy, say I. To do so shows a wise as well as a brave spirit. A bold front has cowed many an adversary.

Opening my knife, I held it between my teeth and crept forward. Still those terrible eyes glowed through the darkness, growing more menacing the nearer we approached. Now there seemed but the distance of a few rods between us and them.

Fortunately, as we proceeded, the space above us grew gradually higher again. We were able to get upon our feet.

"The passage is only a fissure in the rock," announced my comrade, looking up. "The roof here is but a tangle of boughs, and through the foliage I see a star."

But I dared not turn my gaze even for a second from the burning eyes. All at once there was a stir, a low gurgling sound, and it seemed to me that I felt the creature's breath upon my face.

"Have a care, the beast is making ready to spring upon us," I cried, and with my knife in my hand I dashed forward.

Ramon followed close; but when we reached the spot where the intruder had been a moment earlier, there was still an intervening space between ourselves and its fierce gaze. Yet we had not put it to flight, for it continued to glare at us with unblinking steadfastness. As I ran, the walls of the cave appeared suddenly to fall away on every side. Instead of being shut in by the rock, I found myself surrounded by bushes. Before my feet was a pebbly beach, beyond which flowed the surging flood of the Richelieu, and over my head was only the starlit sky.

"Where is the wild beast that confronted us in the cave?" cried my friend beside me. "Ha, ha! Those terrible eyes were nothing more nor less than two lights in a farmhouse on the opposite side of the river."

"Yes," I said, "and the sounds we heard were the rippling of the current and the voice of the wind through the trees. The breath of the beast was the breeze blowing back the warm air of the cave."

We would have laughed aloud had we dared. But to be apprehended by the redcoats now would suit us less than ever, and would in addition brand us as cowards in the estimation of Mademoiselle Jacquette. For were we taken, how would she ever be brought to believe otherwise than that we were trying to escape, in spite of our protestations that we would stay to guard her. Though forced by circumstances

to restrain the merriment that convulsed us, we chuckled mightily to ourselves.

After an interval, getting the better of our mirth, we looked about us, scanning the place where we were and the shore beyond the current.

"Let us search for the canoe," said Ramon.

We soon found it among the bushes, a light, strong little craft. In it lay two paddles and a hamper.

I picked up one of the paddles and balanced it in my hand.

"It is a good one, and has been selected with care for a long voyage," I said.

As I replaced it my fingers touched a soft texture like the coat of a tiny mole. I caught up the little object. It was a lady's glove.

"Ha, ha, monsieur! this time I am more fortunate than you," I declared in a low tone. "I'll wager this glove belongs to Mademoiselle Jacquette. I shall keep it to prove to her that we have been here, and have voluntarily returned to aid in the defence of her castle of St. Denis, as well as to strike a blow for the freedom of her country."

"Then instead of loitering we would better go back by the way we came," suggested Ramon, almost sullenly.

It did not take us long to retrace our path. When we re-entered the semi-darkness of the cave, the lantern we had left in the cellar guided us truly, and before long we regained our place of refuge, all the cheerier for our amusing excursion.

The next morning Dr. Nelson came and released us.

"Since you have made your choice, gentlemen, we can at least furnish you with more comfortable quarters," he said, and brought us to his house.

We breakfasted with him, but to my disappointment

Mademoiselle Jacquette did not make her appearance. That Ramon missed her presence also, I knew from his absent air.

There was much to be done, however, and he presently aroused himself from his abstraction to enter with me into the doctor's plans for the defence of the house and its environs.

It was agreed that I should watch before the house door. To Rycerski was assigned the duty of officer of the guard. The doctor himself was to be commander-in-chief, and would be found wherever he might be most needed. As so many of the habitants and their families had flocked for protection to the strong outbuildings, we spent the best part of the day in drilling the men. A number of them had muskets, others were armed with farm implements. All counted there were about a hundred farmers.

In the evening we were rewarded for our toil by being favored with the company of the lady of our dreams, who was the only lady in the house, though there were several woman servants.

Dr. Nelson had some time before sent his wife and children to "the States" for their security. Not knowing of their departure, Jacquette, the orphan chatelaine of a seigneurie down the river, had come to visit them, and her return home was now cut off.

Even at this eleventh hour the doctor tried to shake our resolution.

"Gentlemen," he said, "to-morrow you shall conduct mademoiselle and her maid across the border."

Fortunately the girl helped us out of the dilemma by sturdily refusing to be sent away.

"Uncle," she said, "if I cannot, like these gentlemen, fight to defend your house, I can encourage the women and children who have taken refuge on the

estate. Besides, you have not yet appointed a quartermaster. You will need some one to look after the supplies and give out rations to your volunteers."

"*Bien, bien*, have your way, *chérie*," yielded the doctor at last. "It is easier to rout an army than to contend against a woman. From this moment, my lass, you may consider yourself commissary-general of our forces."

Since this evening might be the last opportunity to rest that our host would have for some time, we prevailed upon him to retire. But I took up my position on the gallery, and Ramon posted sentries in the village. The night was overcast, portending a storm.

The whitewashed cottages of the hamlet seemed like a company of ghosts in misty winding-sheets, and beyond their thatched roofs the woods were masses of mysterious shadows. A half score of men were on the watch like myself, yet the neighborhood was so quiet it might have been a wilderness. Only the occasional hoot of an owl broke the silence.

My occupation was monotonous enough, but I had one subject for meditation that kept my mind interested and wakeful, the thought of Mademoiselle Jacquette. As the hours passed, I performed prodigies of valor while defending her not only from peril, but from the slightest annoyance at the hands of the military. I amused myself by conjuring up more than one scene during which she thanked me with tears in her beautiful eyes for the services I had rendered her.

"Mademoiselle," I answered, "the greatest privilege of my life is to be permitted to do anything for you."

"Ah, how glad I am she is here at St. Denis," I mentally ejaculated, as I paced beneath the window

of the chamber where she was perhaps dreaming sweet maiden dreams.

Again, as I thought of what might come to us, I heartily wished she were with her friends in safety.

A line of leaden-colored light, the first sign of dawn, appeared in the eastern sky. The river changed from black to gray.

I was aroused from my reverie by a far-off sound like the beating of a horse's hoofs upon the highway from St. Ours.

"Is the rider French or British, a friend bringing warning or a soldier upon some secret errand?" I asked myself as I listened intently. He came nearer.

"Halt!"

The cry rang out crisp and sharp.

It was the challenge of the sentry at the outpost. But the hoof-beats kept on.

"Drat the stupid habitant-sentinel! Is he going to let the stranger get away without giving the watch-word?" I muttered, starting forward. No! a musket-shot cut the air; it was followed by another; horse and rider were stopped.

I discharged my own weapon, as a signal that at the house we knew what was taking place, and eagerly awaited developments. In a few minutes Rycerski appeared, accompanied by two of our men, between whose levelled muskets walked a redcoat who bore himself gallantly.

The misfortunes of a brave man and a gentleman always appeal to one's sympathies, so as he stepped on the gallery, I saluted him. It was just light enough for me to see that his face brightened at this unexpected consideration. He was young, a handsome fellow, and self-possessed as if he were going to a wedding.

As the party reached the house door it was thrown open, and there in the hall stood Dr. Nelson, fully dressed and armed.

Ramon touched his cap in military fashion and reported, "Sir, I have the honor to inform you that the sentries have just arrested this gentleman, who refuses to account for his presence in the neighborhood at this hour."

The doctor bent his keen eye upon the prisoner, the eye of the physician accustomed to the study of human character as well as of human ailments.

"I regret, sir, that I am compelled to intercept your journey," he said.

"As an officer of her Majesty's service, I protest against my unwarrantable apprehension and demand to be immediately released," exclaimed the young man haughtily.

"This I cannot grant," answered our host, "but, except for the restraint upon your liberty, you will not find my house a dreary place. I must insist, however, upon knowing your name and why you were riding through the night?"

The calm dignity of the doctor was not lost upon the stranger, and thinking it better to accede to the request he replied, "I am Lieutenant Weston of the Thirty-second, and my mission may be known to any one. Troops have been sent up the river to put down in this district the disaffection of which my arrest is an instance. When they left Montreal I was absent on leave from my regiment. Having set out on horseback to join it, I reached Sorel after the expedition had left the town, and coming on, I must have taken the wrong road."

"Yes, there are two roads from Sorel, which converge some four miles from St. Ours," affirmed the

doctor. "With more of military instinct than the commander of the expedition, you took the shorter one. Make yourself easy, sir. We hold you only as a hostage. My man will conduct you to a room, thus you may have an opportunity for a short rest. We breakfast at eight o'clock, and I hope you will favor us with your company."

The lieutenant with a sigh resigned himself to the existing state of affairs. I recognized him as the younger of the two officers whom I had met on my way to St. Charles.

"Sir, though I am heartily sorry you are my gaoler, I congratulate myself upon having so considerate a host," he returned, in a milder tone. "I hoped to breakfast with my fellow-officers; but since fate has decreed otherwise, I thank you for your hospitality."

He bowed to the doctor, who beckoned an old man from among the group of servants that, by this time, stood gaping in the passage.

"Pascal," he said, "show the gentleman to the south chamber, and furnish him with every comfort the house can supply."

Pascal, shuffling forward, led away the prisoner-guest.

"Now, my friends, you too must take a short repose," said Dr. Nelson, turning to Ramon and myself. "Since it is daylight I can both keep watch over the house and perform the duties of officer of the guard." Nothing loth, my comrade and I sought the room that had been given us. Throwing ourselves on the broad feather-bed that with difficulty was restrained within the limits of the high, four-post bedstead, we were soon sleeping the sleep of those who have kept a long and anxious watch.

At eight o'clock we were punctual in the breakfast-parlor. During mealtime only could we be sure of seeing Mademoiselle Jacquette, although I had noticed the day before, with a pang of jealousy, that she afforded Ramon several opportunities for a few moments' conversation with her.

On this morning, as she sat behind the burnished coffee-urn, she looked as fresh and fair as the bouquet of holly with which she had adorned the centre of the table. Glossy as its leaves was her abundant hair, that curled so prettily over her graceful head; and scarlet like the holly berries was her trim blouse tied with a silken cord at the throat and waist.

"Good morning, monsieur le capitaine," she called to me with rallying coquetry.

"Good morning, mademoiselle," I answered, following her humor.

Then I fell to wondering whether the bit of red silk or a blue ribbon looked better against her creamy neck—I who until recently had seldom noticed a woman's dress!

Perhaps Ramon was deciding in favor of the ribbon, for when he greeted her his gaze lingered overlong upon her face and the picture she made. Or was it that, like me, each day he found her more charming, and every gewgaw she wore seemed the more perfectly to set off her beauty? The latter had its effect upon the lieutenant, too. As he came into the room his face was clouded, but when his glance fell on the young hostess his brow cleared and his eyes lit up with interest.

"Mademoiselle de Rouville, I present Lieutenant Weston," said Dr. Nelson, from the foot of the table.

Jacquette, without rising, held out her little hand.

"Monsieur le lieutenant, I hope you have rested well," she said.

"As well, mademoiselle, as a prisoner can rest," he replied cheerfully, having clasped her pretty fingers, with unnecessary warmth, I thought, when he seated himself in the place assigned him, "yet a prisoner is seldom so fortunate as I now find myself."

Where had the Englishman learned his manners? They showed nothing of the brusqueness of his nationality.

The meal was hurried; we had much to do during the morning. The storm had come, a downpour of hail and sleet.

"*Ma foi*, Jacquette, are you wearing a scarlet coat in compliment to our guest?" inquired the doctor with a laugh, as he surveyed his niece's attire.

Jacquette flushed almost as red as her blouse as she answered, "Ah, uncle Wolfred, you know scarlet was loved by our Canadian seigneurs, and they delighted to wear it. I will admit, however, that though I am French with all my heart, if need arises the lieutenant will find me a friend."

Weston's color mounted high and his countenance wore a frank smile as he bowed in acknowledgment of the cordial speech.

"Mademoiselle, when a woman graciously offers a man her friendship, fortune holds out a helping hand to him," he said. "I foresee that Fate will soon set me at liberty. If I am ever granted a chance to serve you, be sure I shall remember your kindness."

As we rose from the table, Dr. Nelson beckoned to me and, at the same time, called the lieutenant to join us in the recess of a window.

"Sir," he said, addressing the young Englishman,

"in an hour your regiment will be upon us. If I keep you here and the fight goes against us, I shall be powerless to protect you from the desperate anger of our people. For your safety, I am about to send you to St. Charles in my calèche. Your own horse will be restored to you later."

"Dr. Nelson, put me under guard if you will," objected the lieutenant strenuously, "but let me await the outcome of the skirmish. If you are worsted, as, pardon me, seems most probable, possibly I may be of some service to — the lady."

He stopped short, but his glance fell upon Jacquette with respectful admiration.

The doctor was not to be moved.

"I regret to send you out in the storm, but the measure is necessary," he said. "The calèche is at the door. Here, wrap yourself in my cloak. No habitant of the Richelieu will insult the physician's old gray cloak of '*étoffe du pays*.'"

The lieutenant shook it off.

"If go I must, I will not go to prison in disguise," he declared. "Good-by, sir; I thank you for your kindness."

Then crossing the room to where Mademoiselle Jacquette stood before the hearth, he took leave of her in a few low-spoken words.

Again she gave him her hand, which he clasped eagerly and raised to his lips. The next moment he turned away and strode out to the doorstone.

I followed, saw him take his place in the swaying vehicle, and gave the driver his instructions for the journey.

"Au revoir, lieutenant," I said at parting.

But a moodiness had settled upon him.

"Good-by," he replied gloomily. "I would rather

die here than be sent away, even though it be through the kindness of a foe."

"Cheer up, we shall all see fighting enough," I cried with gay abandon. "I wish you an unadventurous ride up the côte."

He struck his forehead with his hand and murmured something I did not catch. The driver whipped up the shaggy horse, and the calèche, lumbering down the road, disappeared from view.

CHAPTER FIFTH

ST. DENIS

“**T**HE redcoats will be upon us within two hours,” exclaimed the doctor, as I returned to the dining-room. “We will place a guard here, but it is the distillery and the stone house of the Widow St. Germain, near by, that we must fortify. I sent word to madame by Jacqueline last evening.”

Another surprise was in store for us. Scarcely had our host uttered the last words when the door of the room was thrown open and there entered a stranger, of whose presence in the house both Ramon and I had been until the moment ignorant.

He was a large, broad-shouldered man with a handsome head, regular features, a proud mouth that drooped at the corners, and dark, fiery eyes. His long frock-coat was of black cloth with wide lapels, his vest and stock of black satin, and his shirt bosom was stiffly starched, after the new fashion.

“Papineau!” I involuntarily ejaculated, under my breath, while my comrade made a futile attempt to conceal his astonishment.

The guest was indeed Monsieur Papineau, and our spirits mounted as we realized all that his presence at this crisis might mean. The great spokesman of the patriots, he whose eloquence in the assembly had aroused the province to insurrection, was here, ready to lead us in the coming engagement, ready to give his

life, if need be, for the cause of his country, as he had repeatedly proclaimed his willingness to do.

"Monsieur Papineau," said our host, "Count Ryckerski and Mr. Adair are two gallant free lances who have joined their fortunes with ours."

The guest acknowledged our salutation with an abrupt nod, bowed with a shade more of ceremony to Jacquette, and seated himself at the table.

It seemed to me as if the barometer that hung near one of the windows must have suddenly fallen still lower, and the day grew darker outside.

For the great man was not calmly confident as we had seen him at St. Charles, and as befitted the leader of a cause whose first faint glow he had fanned into a flame. On the contrary, his manner was nervous and distraught, as of one who had lain awake long in the night striving to determine upon a plan of action. His dress was disordered, as if hastily donned, and when he spoke his voice was sharp and betrayed irritability.

Dr. Nelson, eager to be gone that he might make his position impregnable, was, I think, as astonished as ourselves at the imminent collapse of his friend, while Jacquette, as she poured coffee for the late-comer, stared at him in open amazement.

"Monsieur, you are not well," she hazarded, her timidity conquered by kindly solicitude.

"Truly I am not, child," he answered, mopping his face with his handkerchief.

Having breakfasted hastily he rose from his place, tipping over his chair in the act, and turning to the doctor broke out impetuously, regardless of our presence:

"My God, Nelson, what shall I do?"

"The only course for every man here is to fight," I

was on the point of interposing indignantly, for this singular behavior had speedily overcome my awe of the leader.

Our host raised a warning hand that checked the words upon my tongue. A smile half incredulous, half scornful, played about Ramon's handsome mouth as he turned to the window. Mademoiselle had run out of the room.

"You know, my friend, I am not a soldier," continued Papineau. "My mission is to proclaim our rights in the Assembly and houses of Parliament, to brave public opinion and block all business of the colonial government until our demands are recognized. If I fall in the *mêlée* here, who will battle for New France in the council-halls?"

There were tears in his eyes as he concluded, and his voice shook with emotion.

Dr. Nelson was equal to the occasion. The idol of the people was indeed showing himself to be of poorer than ordinary clay. A man with so little stamina at the head of the habitants of St. Denis in their struggle with the military would mean speedy defeat and the loss of many lives. Yet it was now too late for them to make their submission. It was to defend their lives and hearthstones they had armed themselves.

"As you say, Monsieur Papineau, you are not a soldier," he rejoined with a tinge of irony. "Your place is not in the field."

"Then you advise me to go away at once?" queried the statesman precipitately.

"This is a time when every man must decide for himself," answered the doctor.

"I will go to St. Charles, I will tell the habitants of the bold stand you are making, and encourage

them to follow your example," repeated Papineau, as he paused in his pacing of the floor and turned to Ramon and me, and then back to the doctor for assent to his decision.

"The roads will be desperately bad, and the sleet is coming down in torrents," Ramon remarked.

"My dear sir, I care nothing for the weather," protested the uneasy visitor, anxious only to be gone.

Dr. Nelson crossed the room and pulled the bell-rope that dangled on the wall.

Pascal appeared forthwith.

"Pascal," said the master curtly, "Monsieur Papineau's horse. Do you *heär*?"

The servant retreated, gaping in wonder.

Ten minutes later the so-called liberator of Canada set off without formal leave-taking. The last we saw of him was the glimpse we had from the window as he urged his beast forward through the slough of mud where the road had been.

"A sounding brass," I muttered angrily as we watched him; "yet the name of this man has been mentioned in the same breath as that of Washington."

"Gentlemen, let us make haste," interposed Dr. Nelson. "This delay may cost us dear."

Arming ourselves, we followed him to the stone house, in whose cellar were hidden numbers of the women and children of the village.

The place was being garrisoned, but Madame St. Germain refused to relinquish her own room, and Jacqueline took up her station with the lady, the same who had borne her company on the day of the husking festival at St. Charles.

All points of defence had been well provisioned, and since the habitant is always happy when he has the certainty of being well fed, the throng who crowded

the house from cellar to loft — save only the sleeping-room of madame — were as cheerful a company of brave fellows as if they looked forward to a fête instead of a fight. The majority were clad in “*étouffe du pays*” and wore rude moccasins and home-plaited straw hats, but with many this was an affectation, the habitant costume being recommended in the resolutions drawn up at St. Charles.

Not all the men of the vicinity who had pledged themselves to the cause were present, however. At the call to arms many had fled up the river, across the plain, or to the woods. Of those who remained only a few had muskets, good or bad; the rest were armed with pickaxes, pitchforks, and cudgels. Of ammunition, I noted with concern, there was only a small supply.

Jacquette, warned by the doctor’s remark at breakfast, had laid aside her red blouse and now wore a frock of gray homespun. With Madame St. Germain, she was engaged in distributing rations to the men.

“May I help you, mademoiselle?” I asked as she appeared, laden with a great basket.

“Alas, you must deal out powder and shot,” she sighed, and passed on.

All the while the rain was pouring down as if the floodgates of heaven were open. Providence was apparently with us in the matter of the weather.

Shortly after ten o’clock Jean Baptiste, the scout, brought in word that the troops had disembarked at Sorel, their steamer being too large to ascend the Richelieu.

“As they marched up the côte, I crossed their path at St. Ours and hailed them to say that the bridge over the Ruisseau des Plantes is washed away,” he continued. “They thought me a peaceful habitant

who had gone to the village to sell a pig. The mud was up to their boot-tops, and the wind cut like a thousand piercing arrows amid the sleet, but they kept on by the other road. Their rations must be nearly gone. They will fight to the end, for hunger makes wolves of men."

Quarter of an hour later we descried them, pressing on up the river road, which then was a highway at the foot of the bluff.

"They are coming to arrest Dr. Nelson, our friend in sickness and trouble, but we will never let him be torn from us," shouted one of our habitants, and the others took up the cry.

The cavalry came first. Then the foot-soldiers, shoulder to shoulder, a long line of redcoats with formidable muskets and a howitzer.

In the stone house Dr. Nelson seemed everywhere at once.

"Remember, boys, not a shot is to be fired until I give the word," he directed. "We must hoard our powder and bullets until the moment when they will serve us best."

The men nodded and in silence waited at the barricaded windows.

With music of fife and drum the troops took possession of the abandoned buildings, from which presently came a rain of flame and the whizz of bullets through the sleet.

To it we promptly responded in kind, and we had the grim satisfaction of seeing some of the enemy fall back from their position. Anon there was a flash as of lightning, and almost at the same instant the stone house was struck as by a bolt from the skies.

It trembled like a living creature, and some of our

habitants, unused to the horrors of war, poor fellows, dropped the weapons from their hands.

"Courage, boys," cried Ramon, to whom the sound was inspiriting as martial music. "It was only a ball from the howitzer."

"But it has made a breach in the wall of the house," yelled Jean Baptiste, the scout. "We are lost."

"It recoiled like a hand-ball," I shouted in turn. "The walls are as thick as the bastions of Fort Chambly."

Finding that the missile had rebounded without injuring any one, our men took heart once more and fought with the stoicism of Indians. Before long a shell from the howitzer, penetrating the barricade of a window, exploded in the main room, killing five of the most gallant defenders of our position and wounding several.

For a few seconds consternation reigned. Thinking the enemy would effect an entrance to the house, I sprang toward the room where the ladies were, resolved to defend them with my last breath.

The door stood ajar and they had fallen upon their knees. As I approached, however, Jacqueline, seeing that all danger from the shell was past, rose to her feet.

"Bring the wounded in here! Madame St. Germain and I will care for them," she cried, and the more quickly to give them aid, would have rushed out into the place where such dreadful destruction had been wrought.

"You must not go there," I said sternly, interposing myself in the doorway; "the wounded will be brought in. I fear you will have much to do during the remainder of the afternoon."

Closing the door after me, I went back to my post.

So the fight went on for an hour, when a party of redcoats led by their captain issuing from the buildings in which they had intrenched themselves, surrounded the stone house, charging and firing at intervals in a resolute attempt to carry our position by storm.

But our leader held it valiantly with a sharp return fire, and the English captain fell, so badly wounded that they were forced to drag him off the field. The assailants were thereupon recalled.

Toward two o'clock we, on our side, beheld a force of habitants marching down the river road from the direction of Belœil. They were men from St. Hilaire come to our assistance.

What a shout of joy went up from the stone house as we saw them attack the besiegers, hurling themselves upon a band of soldiers who had been harassing us from behind a barn!

"Alas, Nial," said Dr. Nelson, coming over to where I stood peppering the enemy through a small window, "they can keep up the firing all night, while we have only enough powder to last about an hour longer. Jean Baptiste says there is more over at St. Antoine. If we had it, our victory would be assured."

"I will row across the river and bring back a supply of the powder in less than an hour," I cried with rashness.

"Impossible! Before putting off from the shore you would be a dead man," returned our leader sadly.

"Not so certainly," I cried. "Look!"

Our reinforcements had dislodged the soldiers from behind the barn, and the remainder of the assaulting party rushed to their support. The doctor clasped my hand.

"You know where to find the canoe," he said. "Take it, and if you *will* go, may God be with you."

I nodded and slipped away, stealing out of the rear door of the house, which was on the side of the water. The redcoats had more than they could do for the moment. Crouching below the bluff and protected here and there by shrubs and by the shadow of the buildings, I ran several hundred yards, and unobserved reached the spot where Ramon and I had come upon the canoe.

It was there among the bushes still. Searching about, I found the paddle also, and with no loss of time put off from the beach.

As I did so a yell from the enemy showed that I was discovered, and a volley of shot followed me. A bullet disabled my right arm, another pierced my cap, but, thanks to a merciful Providence, my journey was not prevented.

The little canoe, as if endowed with something of the brave spirit of the lady who had placed it at my disposal for a very different errand, dipped into the current with the confidence of a river bird. The driving sleet added greatly to the difficulty of my attempt, for the wind lashed the water into a tempestuous sea, and the keen frost stiffened my limbs and caused my wounded arm to ache savagely.

Nevertheless I blessed the storm, since it formed a curtain between me and my foes. Probably they thought I was done for, because they stopped firing after me.

As I sped on, I thought how differently the scene had appeared on the morning Ramon and I came to St. Denis.

Up the river to my left, set like a jewel in a silver chain, lay the Ile aux Cerfs, or Island of the Stags,

and the white-capped waters broke upon its strand like the waves of the sea upon the shore. The beautiful wooded isle itself was now shrouded in a winter's mist which the country-people were wont to call the "veil of Madame de Montenac," to whose seigneurie the lands belonged. Belœil, the great solitary mountain that rises from the plain above St. Hilaire, was entirely concealed by the fog. At my right the current swept away to St. Ours and Rouville, and thence to join the wider tide of the St. Lawrence at Sorel.

From St. Denis, on ordinary days, we could hail the habitants of St. Antoine. Although a fair stretch of water lies between the two villages, never before had the river seemed particularly broad at this point. But now, when I realized what the failure of my mission might mean to the besieged patriots, I found the voyage long.

As I gained the shore and, with the aid of my paddle, ran up the canoe on the frozen strand as though it were a sledge, a peremptory voice called out of the mist in French, —

"Hold! Who goes there?"

Stumbling out upon the ground I found myself covered by the musket of a thick-set habitant in blanket coat and red cap, the very counterfeit presentment of an old-time "coureur de bois."

"I am a messenger from St. Denis," I cried. "Your friends there are in desperate straits. If you have any powder here, in the name of heaven, give us a share of it for our defence."

He lowered his weapon and seized me by the arm.

"You have crossed from St. Denis," he repeated supporting me up to the bluff. "Come and tell our



“‘I found myself covered by the musket of a thick-set habitant.’”

Page 62.

people what is going on there. Are our friends being shot down by the troops? *Hélas, hélas!* Powder and shot of course you shall have, if it were our last round."

When we reached the top of the bank I saw that the villagers had erected barricades for their own protection, not knowing how soon they themselves might be attacked by the soldiers.

They crowded around me to hear my news, resolute, swart-skinned, wiry men, armed with firelocks and farm implements; sturdy women who, if need should come, could defend their homes with the courage and strength of men; children who seemed not to know fear.

"The troops are being driven back toward St. Ours," I shouted. "Give us but the means and we will rout them entirely."

The good souls generously gave me a keg of their powder.

"Let me wrap it in a blanket to make sure of keeping it dry," said the bluff sentinel who had challenged me.

Carrying it down, he deposited it in the stern of the canoe.

"God bless you for good neighbors," I called back as I started on the return trip. "If you need our aid, be sure we shall be more than ready to render it."

Had the redcoats suspected my errand, I could never have reached St. Denis again but, when I had put out from the strand, they no doubt supposed I was simply trying to escape and their bullets had finished me. For no squad of soldiers lay in wait when I reached the beach. Moreover, they were being even more hardly pressed than before; so, to our great good luck, I got the powder into the cave

and up into the distillery, whence it was distributed to our men.

"Adair, yours is the bravest act of the day," cried Dr. Nelson, clasping me in his arms when I succeeded in gaining the stone house with a goodly supply of the precious commodity. Ramon embraced me also.

When I saw Jacquette, standing wide-eyed at the door of the room which had been turned into a hospital, my heart beat faster than when I was under the enemy's fire, as the wild hope entered my mind that, in the excitement of the moment, she might also be demonstrative in her greeting. She spoke her welcome only with her eyes however, until, catching sight of my arm hanging limp by my side, she grew paler than before and cried out, "See, he is wounded!"

"Phouf! it is nothing; the shot scarce touched me," I answered, making for my former position with the men at the window. But the doctor ordered me to the care of Madame St. Germain, who bandaged my arm, a process to which I submitted with less objection since Jacquette assisted her so zealously that I went back to my post feeling as if I had been strengthened with oil and wine, as was the fashion of treating a wound in the olden time.

"Who will take a message from me to the men across the road?" called the doctor. "No, not you, Adair, you are wounded. Nor Ramon, for I need you here."

"I will go," volunteered Charles Perrault, a gallant young sieur who fought near us.

Nelson hesitated.

"Though it is important that the men should get word from me, the way lies in the line of the enemy's fire," he said.

"It is but the risk of one life to save many," answered Perrault.

Having received the message he sped away, running down what looked like a lane of flame. Unhurt, he reached the men and accomplished his errand, but alas, in returning he was shot down.

By this it was late in the afternoon. Just as the dark was setting in the notes of a bugle smote upon the air.

"They are sounding a retreat," exclaimed the doctor, joyously.

A shout went up from our men.

So hastily did the troops retire to St. Ours and Sorel that they left their howitzer and their fallen soldiers behind them.

"Bear the wounded, friend and foe alike, to my house. I will care for them there," directed Dr. Nelson.

During the next hour his orders were carried out. The humanity of our noble leader in devoting his means and his skill as a surgeon to the service of the redcoats was afterwards praised even by the enemy. Were our poor people as generously treated later, the story of the Patriot War would be another tale.

CHAPTER SIXTH

THROUGH THE FOREST

MADAME ST. GERMAIN had come to stay with Jacquette at the doctor's house, to assist her in the care of the wounded, and at the same time play the part of chaperon.

It was late in the afternoon of the third day after the fight, and we were gathered in the living-room, Dr. Nelson sitting at a table engaged in drawing a small map of the surrounding country, Ramon talking with Mademoiselle de Rouville in the chimney-corner, and I by the window chatting with madame.

"Ha, ha, a good story, is it not, monsieur?" laughed the widow, nodding at me vivaciously. "Jean Baptiste, showing an old French coin to Brown, the Yankee medicine-vendor, said proudly, 'My ancestor was made a chevalier by the king whose picture you see here.' And the trickster would-be leader of our people replied, 'What a coincidence! My ancestor was scalped by the Indian whose portrait you see on this American cent.' Ha, ha!"

Madame's black eyes shone like the gleam of the will-o'-the-wisp in the dusk of a summer's night. Truly, the buxom widow of thirty might still turn the head of many a man.

Though I professed to be amused at the jest, as in duty bound, I made but a poor listener, for my thoughts were with the pair by the fire.

Ramon stood looking down at Jacquette, who sat on the chimney-bench, and the two youthful figures seemed to stand out like a picture against the bright background of the chimney's glow.

He spoke in a tone so low that his words were evidently intended for her alone, his manner was eloquent, his smile brought an answering smile to the lips of the girl as she looked up at him. Not only his features, but her sweet face seemed illumined. Was it but by the light of the fire? "Ramon loves her, and she is, at least, interested in him," I said to myself. "I love her too, God knows. But I have sworn to be his friend. Would it be acting the part of a friend to try to win her heart, when from the first he has laid siege to it? His chaff as to my having found favor in her eyes was but a blind. In honor I will leave him a fair field. But I shall never cease to love her, even though that love must be hidden in my own breast."

As my eyes dwelt upon them and my thoughts ran on thus, Jacquette's mood suddenly changed.

"Ah, Monsieur Ramon," she cried aloud, "you ask for a chanson? How, then, does this please you?"

'Gai lon la! Gai le rosier
Du joli moie de mai.
Gai lon la! Gai le rosier.'"

Like a spell upon us was the lilting tune, the refrain, the merry abandon of her voice.

"*Bien, chérie*, give us the rest of the song," said the doctor, laying down his pen as she paused.

We added our entreaties, and with a shrug of her pretty shoulders she continued:

“ Par derrièr' chez ma tante
Lui y-a-t-un bois joli.
Le rossignol y chante
Et le jour et le nuit.
Gai lon la, gai le rosier ” —

“ Du joli moie de mai,” joined Madame St. Germain in a rich alto.

Patting her little white hands together to mark the rhythm and smiling as she sang, Jacquette appeared the very embodiment of the spirit of the music, a river sprite or a nymph of the Richelieu forests.

Singing and motion are allied. She rose to her feet and, slowly swaying to and fro at first like a young white birch wooed by the breeze, began to dance to the music of her song.

“ Le rossignol y chante
Et le jour et la nuit ;
Il chante pour les belles
Qui n'ont point de mari.
Gai lon la ! Gai le rosier.”

The firelight shone upon her gray frock, upon her charming face and the dark curls that stirred as she danced ; it made a gleaming path on the oaken floor for her dainty feet.

For the moment, there in that pleasant room as we watched her, the warlike happenings of three days earlier were forgotten.

But dancing is contagious. Presently Ramon was treading a measure with her in lively fashion. Anon, lured by her witchery, I found myself bowing to mademoiselle in courtly fashion, while the dance slackened to the tempo of the minuet, and again, as I clasped her delicate fingers, raising my arm above her head in order that, wheeling gracefully, she

might pass under the arch made by our clasped hands.

Of a sudden, however, our mirth was interrupted by the call of a habitant outside. Pausing, we all looked toward the window.

Every day the silver current of the river had grown narrower, for the ice forming along the strand daily reached out farther into the stream, like the relentless grasp of Old Winter himself.

Now on the opposite shore the last rays of sunshine touched with glory the tin-covered spire of the church at St. Antoine and brought out into relief the dark pines of the Island of the Stags.

"My word!" I cried. "Here comes a man on a pony galloping down the road from St. Charles."

While I spoke he drew rein at the gate.

The doctor hastened to the house door, and returned directly with Jean Baptiste, the scout.

"You may tell your story here," said Nelson, grimly.

Pale as death Jacquette went over to her uncle, and linking her arm in his stood waiting to hear the news. Ramon and I drew near the messenger, and Madame St. Germain rose from her chair.

"The soldiers from Chambly marched down the côte two nights ago," began Jean Baptiste, dejectedly. "Yesterday morning they reached St. Charles, where two or three hundred patriots were gathered. Knowing the redcoats would promptly fire upon them, they opened fire themselves, but their powder and bullets soon gave out. The soldiers charged upon them with the bayonet, killing many; they set fire to a barn in which others had taken refuge, and drove the remainder into the river, where they were drowned like rats in a trap."

"And Brown, the Yankee quack, who posed as their leader and insisted that the villagers should decline our offer of assistance?" inquired the doctor, who had heard the tale with working features and clenched hands.

Jean Baptiste laughed hoarsely.

"Monsieur Brown ran off at the beginning of the fight, and like our valiant Papineau is, *sans doute*, well on his way to Vermont."

Jacquette fled, sobbing, from the room, and madame hastened after her.

When the scout had withdrawn to repeat his tragic story in the kitchen, our host, after pacing the floor in silence for some minutes, said, turning to Ramon and me, —

"Gentlemen, two days ago I felt we had taken the first step in the path that was to give freedom to Canada; but this rout has opened my eyes. Until we are better prepared, we must avoid another meeting with the troops. I will send a messenger to our American friends at St. Albans. An express must also ride post haste to the Two Mountains, where the people are preparing to resist. They have heard of our success. They must also be warned of the defeat at St. Charles."

"I ask the privilege of going to St. Albans," cried Ramon, impetuously. Surprise kept me dumb. He had made haste to choose the better mission. The journey would indeed be long and wearisome, but the messenger to the States would go as the representative of the patriots, would address meetings of the people there, even as Jacquette, spirited daughter of the chevaliers as she was, had adjured us to do. If successful he would not only serve the cause but, as at one stroke, win prominence and distinction.

This opportunity my companion, with a selfishness new to him, demanded for himself.

Disappointed for the first time in his friendship, and finding voice at last, I hotly contested his claim.

"No, I will go," I declared.

We were on the verge of a dispute, when Dr. Nelson interposed.

"Gentlemen, we must not waste time in idle arguments," he protested. "Count Rycerski, since you were the first to speak, you shall have your choice. Mr. Adair, you will not refuse to carry a letter from me to Dr. Chenier at St. Eustache?"

"Sir, I have joined you, and I will decline no service you require of me in the name of the cause," I answered sullenly enough.

When my comrade and I retired to the room we shared, Ramon did not explain his motive in standing by his claim, but strove by all other means in his power to break down the barrier of coldness I had erected between us.

At last it yielded, as a snow fort yields to the sun. How could I be angry with him when I realized that the next day we were to separate, perhaps forever? How could I shut my heart against him who, in the weeks we had been together, the dangers we had shared, had never failed me except in this one instance?

"After all," I said to myself, "had he not a right to choose this mission? Was I not selfish in turn to desire it?"

Thus reproaching myself, I gladly accepted his advance toward reconciliation, and we talked far into the night.

The name of Jacquette was, however, not mentioned between us.

The next afternoon, after a long consultation with Dr. Nelson and a parting tête-à-tête with Jacquette, Ramon set off on his journey. I rode out with him a few miles, and most unwillingly took leave of him when we were about halfway to St. Charles.

"Au revoir, my dear friend. Always think kindly of me," he said, reaching out to me across the rough mane of the sturdy pony with which the doctor had provided him.

"Au revoir," I repeated, clasping his hand, "and may good fortune lead your horse by the bridle."

Neither of us dared trust ourselves to utter the word "good-by," and yet we felt only too keenly that we might never meet again.

"God keep you, for I love you more than I have ever loved any woman," I broke out passionately.

His smile was singularly sweet as he answered me, "And I you."

Then, after pressing my hand again, he withdrew his own, spoke a word to the pony, and rode away, while I, reining in my mount, followed him with my eyes.

When he had gone a short distance he turned in his saddle, waved a last adieu, and cantered across the unfenced fields, avoiding the river road lest he might be intercepted by one of the bands of soldiers now marching up and down the country.

It was the last day of November, and I was thankful that the plain was rough and brown, since, had it been covered with snow, the tracks of his horse's hoofs might have aroused inquiry and led to his arrest.

Thus I watched him ride on toward St. Charles and

St. Hilaire, whence I knew he would pass around behind the great solitary mountain Belœil, which in its armor of steel-blue mist seemed to me a figure of the genius of the Richelieu arisen in his might.

When I in turn set about making my adieux to Mademoiselle Jacquette, she was in so contrary a mood I dared not tell her what I wished to say, which was simply that, since she had unwittingly taken possession of my heart, I would fain have her accept the devotion of my life as well.

"Be my wife," I meant to plead. "So soon as there is again peace on the Richelieu I will make a home for you, perhaps in the abandoned seigneurial house across the river at St. Antoine, which I hear can be bought."

Instead of appearing downcast over the prospect of my speedy departure, she chose to be, I thought, unbecomingly gay.

"We shall be grave enough to-morrow, let us be merry while we may," her manner said.

As we sat together on the settle in the living-room, she would not meet my eyes, but persisted in looking out upon the river, which for once I did not care to do, for I found more interest in studying her sweet face and trim figure.

Was it that her plain homespun gown made her look still slighter than had the white frock in which I first saw her? Or had the anxiety of the last few weeks caused her young form to lose something of its roundness? At least she appeared thinner than on that October day at the huskings.

"*Ma foi*, monsieur," she exclaimed, shaking her pretty curls in a way to turn the head of any hapless lover. "What shall we do for a protector while you are absent? But no, when all the men are gone,

we shall, of course, have peace. It is not the women who stir up wars. Why must men be forever fighting?"

"That women may live in quiet and contentment," I answered, entering into her humor since I could not hope to change it.

"Still it is a great pity Monsieur Papineau and Monsieur Brown, who are so much better as talkers than fighters, cannot arouse the sympathy of the people of the States for us," she went on. "Since they were in such haste to cross the border, why must Count Rycerski be sent upon this errand?"

"Because he can better tell what happened at St. Denis and St. Charles than those who did not wait to see it," I replied dryly.

"Ah yes," she laughed, "I have noticed that some of those who would sacrifice their last drop of blood have been very sparing of the first. But why cannot the inhabitants of St. Eustache manage their own resistance, as our people did here?"

"They are only too ready to do so," said I; and forthwith I explained to her why Dr. Nelson wished me to go.

"Oh, if you go to spare any one anguish or suffering, then go without delay, in the name of God," she entreated, serious at once; "he who risks his life to save others is a greater hero than he who faces the enemy's fire."

"Pascal is saddling my horse. I delay only for it and to take leave of you," I said.

My mare Feu Follet had been mysteriously returned to me at St. Denis by a habitant, who at the same time brought us news that Desmarais and Davignon had safely crossed the border.

A silence now fell between Jacquette and myself.

The girl watched the church spire of St. Antoine as if she feared it would suddenly take wings and fly away, while I furtively continued my study of her face. Despite her bantering tone of a few moments before, she was piqued at something, I could see; and presently a solution of the enigma flashed upon me. It was because Ramon had gone so willingly upon his distant mission, had so carelessly ridden away out of her life. Here she was, urging me to hasten upon my errand, but she would fain have had him stay at St. Denis. What an idiot I was to venture a hope that I might have awakened an emotion warmer than friendship in her heart, that she would give a second thought to me, when a man so handsome, so altogether lovable as Ramon had been with her daily!

"You *omathaun*," I said to myself, "is n't it as plain as the nose on your face that the girl loves him? Don't show what a fool you are by pouring the story of your love into her pretty but unwilling ears."

At this moment the voice of Dr. Nelson called me from the hall. Jacquette followed me to the door-stone, where Pascal waited with my horse.

"Since you must leave us, may you go under the guard of God," exclaimed my kind host.

"Alas that in life one must so often travel toward sorrow," said Jacquette, as I held her hand in mine a few seconds longer than was necessary.

"Mademoiselle, whatever road of life you take, may you travel only toward joy," I said, raising the little hand to my lips.

Then I turned away, sprang to my saddle, and rode off.

But I carried in my mind a picture of a girl whose

dark curls hung down upon the shoulders of her russet-colored frock, over the dainty capelike white collar I had recently watched her embroider, a girl whose eyes glistened with tears as they at last met mine.

CHAPTER SEVENTH

THE TOWERS OF ST. EUSTACHE

THREE days later, as the sun was setting and from the twin towers of the old Norman church the bells were ringing the Angelus, I rode into St. Eustache, one of the most picturesque and important of the rural settlements wherewith the early French colonists adorned the banks of the broad Canadian rivers.

As I entered the Square which was then, as now, sentinelled by the beautiful elms that in summer inclose the place in a cordon of shade, I beheld a group of gray stone buildings that in the mild season must have been overgrown with vines. Here were the manor of the seigneur, the newly completed convent, and beyond, on the bank of the Ottawa, called here *Rivière du Chêne* or River of the Thousand Islands, the church and the rectory.

"Baptiste, can you direct me to the house of Dr. Chenier?" I called out to a passing habitant.

"My name is Jacques," retorted the man with less of urbanity than is usually found among this people, who, in spite of their humble station and isolated lives, retain something of the courtliness of ancestors of higher position who, in the long ago, sought to retrieve their fortunes in the wilderness.

His curtness made me realize at once that the village was seething with unrest.

"*Coute qui coute*, my friend," I said tersely.

Jacques's surliness vanished.

"Ah, m'sieur, you are one of us," he blurted out with an attempt at apology. "M'sieur le docteur's house is just over the bridge, but you will not find him there, for a reward of five hundred pounds has been offered to any one who will deliver him up to the law."

"And does no one know where he is?" I asked, debating how I was to accomplish my errand.

The man misunderstood me.

"M'sieur Chenier can lay his head upon his pillow and sleep securely among the patriots of Two Mountains," he replied; "there is no one who would be so base as to surrender him to his enemies. Many would die for him. His wife is still in their home; friends keep guard over it for her."

"Ah! then, madame will send him the letter I bring," said I.

Nodding my thanks — I would not offend the man by offering him a coin — I crossed the bridge, turned down a path to the left, and halted before the cottage on the river bank.

It must have been a pleasant place in summer with its overshadowing tree, its trellised gallery, and the bit of sward sloping down to the stretch of water that lay between it and the rectory, scarce more than a stone's throw distant. And it commanded a charming view both of the Square and the little islets of the river.

The latter was now a gleaming road of ice, so that from where I dismounted I might have crossed over to the church afoot in two or three minutes. I mention this because of what happened later.

My knock brought to the door a sturdy French Canadian who wore a knife in his belt.

"My name is Adair and I am come with a message from Dr. Nelson of St. Denis to Dr. Chenier," I said.

"Dr. Chenier is not to be found here," he answered gloweringly.

"Then perhaps some one will carry the message to him," I persisted. "It is of the utmost importance."

While he still hesitated to admit me, I caught sight of the room beyond. Before the fire stood another habitant cleaning a musket, and by the opposite side of the hearth a comely young woman sat rocking a cradle.

At the sound of voices the man who was burnishing his weapon wheeled around and came to the door.

"What is this?" he inquired. The grace of his manner contrasted oddly with the homeliness of his clothes. At once my mind leaped to the conclusion that these were a disguise. I repeated my name and errand, adding, "So, perhaps, monsieur, you will see that Dr. Chenier gets the letter."

As he took it from my hand and drew me into the room I noted that he was about thirty years of age, with an erect carriage, a handsome head crowned with brown, wavy locks, a smooth-shaven, intelligent face, and flashing gray eyes.

"Monsieur Adair, you are welcome," he said, embracing me with Gallic ardor. "*I* am Jean Olivier Chenier, and, as you see, I am forced by the vigilance of my enemies to remain in hiding. Since they have already searched this house, it is as safe a place as any. This lady is my wife."

He turned to the woman beside the hearth. She smiled at me and spoke a few words of greeting, but did not cease the rhythmic swaying to and fro of the little basket nest in which a rosy baby lay asleep.

"You bring us news of many victories on the banks of the Richelieu?" said Dr. Chenier, confidently, as he unfolded the letter.

"*Parbleu!* I have ridden hard across the country to inform you of our defeat."

His face clouded as he bent his eyes on the closely written sheet.

"We cannot withdraw now," he cried with reckless fervor when he finished reading it. "Take this back as an answer to St. Denis. For yourself, monsieur, my advice may seem inhospitable, but so soon as you have broken bread with us, you would better get away from St. Eustache."

"What, turn my back on a fight!" I cried, putting aside his earnestness with a laugh. "I am an Irishman, and have never deserted a friend. If you and the people here insist upon making a bold stand against the troops, I shall remain with you."

Dr. Chenier's voice shook with emotion as he accepted my adherence.

"The help of a brave man is like the aid of a sword of truest steel," he said.

It being thus settled that I should stay, I crossed the ice to the rectory.

Monsieur Paquin, the curé, received me in his study. He was a stout man with a large, square face, thick black hair combed up high from a broad brow, and a strong mouth and chin. He presented a striking figure in his black cassock with its little tabbed collar edged with white, worn outside the high linen collar with points running up at each side of the chin, in the fashion affected by the gentlemen of the period.

At first I thought him cold, for he was altogether opposed to the plan of resistance, but as we talked I

discovered that his was a warm and generous heart torn with anxiety for his flock.

"Monsieur Adair, if you come to encourage my people in their folly, be off again without delay, I adjure you," he cried, striking his hands together. "I would not deny liberty to the French! Who knows their grievances better than I? But because I love my people I wish to save them from the sufferings of a vain struggle."

"Yet in the States the courage of a few determined men built up a nation," I argued.

"Yes, yes, because your men were calm as well as brave; because they knew how to wait as well as to fight. Patience and time accomplish more than force and violence."

"Patience abused becomes fury, monsieur le curé," I said, "I shall stand by the patriots, come what will."

All that day habitants from far and near flocked to St. Eustache in response to Chenier's call, but the next morning — it was the fourteenth of December — when a runner of the woods brought news that a body of troops were marching against us from Montreal, many of these volunteers made excuse to return to their villages.

Only a small band was now left to the daring Chenier. As we gathered about him in the Square, he cried, —

"Friends, I, for one, prefer to sell my life dear rather than to be tamely struck down. Even if left alone, I shall still remain here."

His ardor stirred the hearts of all who heard.

"We will fight for liberty and to protect our families," shouted the patriots.

The die was cast.

"But some of us are without muskets, monsieur le

docteur," called a young man at the edge of the little company.

"Then you must take them from the soldiers," replied the leader. "You have pikes and cudgels. Many had no more at St. Denis."

After garrisoning the manor, the curé's house, and the convent (which the nuns had not yet occupied), Chenier, with the rest of his men, less than a hundred, took up his position in the church.

The women and children of the village were hidden in the crypt below. Enthusiastic at being in action once more, I lent a hand in barricading the doors and removing the sashes of the windows that the openings might be used as portholes.

Before long the beating of a drum and the blare of brass musical instruments warned us of the approach of the soldiers. Presently the lookout in the church tower called down to us, —

"They are coming, and they have several field-pieces."

Within a quarter of an hour we heard the clatter of the horses of the cavalry and the tramp of the infantry, and those of us who were so posted as to be able to watch, peering out, beheld a sea of crimson overspreading the snows of the common.

I will not describe the battle. Chenier had expected at least a demand for surrender, but there was none — no attempt at conciliation nor offer of mercy. That a handful of men dared resist a strong military force was marvellous enough. We even compelled our first assailants to retreat. But it was impossible to hold out against such numbers. Those among us who had ammunition kept up a sharp musketry, but before long we saw the manor and other buildings sacked and burned.

Though the shots from the field-pieces battered the walls of our fortress, it staunchly withstood the attack. Even heroes must sometimes succumb to their wounds, however, and so at last a great rent was made in the side of the hoary old church, and through the breach the besiegers thrust flaming bales of hay while, as we were driven back by the smoke, others among them cast burning brands through the windows.

The women and children were still secure in the cellar.

"To the sacristy!" cried Chenier.

Fighting still, we obeyed.

"All is lost!" he exclaimed. "We have fought like patriots, let us die, not like dogs smothered by fire, but like heroes, battling to the end."

He sprang upon the bench that extended along the wall, waved his sword, and after a glance into the churchyard through which the redcoats surged, leaped through the open window down in the midst of them, calling out to us to follow.

A few did so, I among the number.

At once I was in the heart of the *mêlée*, slashing to right and left with my sabre. I saw Chenier fall and fought my way toward him. But before I reached the spot where he lay, a bayonet thrust from a redcoat struck me to the ground, the hoarse cry of "no quarter" re-echoed in a brutal chorus, and the enemy rushed over the field.

In my ears were the oaths of the victors and the shrieks of dying men. I myself was fast losing my hold on life.

The churchyard was quiet again; the soldiers were pursuing the fleeing habitants. As I opened my eyes to take a last glimpse of the world, I saw that I was

in the shadow of the little bridge that spanned the river. If I could roll my body the distance of a few feet I might lie concealed beneath the timbers of the weatherworn structure and perhaps live to fight another day.

Slowly I turned upon my side, then paused, exhausted. Could I ever reach the bridge? I tried again. A dark object lay in my path. It was the body of a villager already stark and cold. I could not go around it, so I drew myself over it, scarce heeding the chill of repulsion at the contact with death.

Did the enemy believe they had left only dead men in the churchyard, or were any of the soldiers watching me, amused at my antics and ready to pin me to the earth with their bayonets in the moment when I should gain my haven?

I did not care. My strength was giving out. It would be so much easier to die than to live, to bivouac here on the snow rather than to make any further exertion.

As I was about to give up, a thought flashed upon me, — Madame Chenier. The patriot had committed her to my care if he should fall and I survive.

"I must live to find and protect her," I moaned as I lay face downward on the snow.

The coldness upon my forehead revived me momentarily; by a final trial I gained the shelter of the bridge. Then, spent by the effort, I felt that I was dying. And presently — it seemed to me — *I died.*

CHAPTER EIGHTH

TWO WOMEN

WHEN I came to myself I was in a hut on one of the Thousand Islands of the Ottawa, cared for by a lady and two attendants. My chief nurse was no other than the desolate widow of the patriot-hero.

How strange are the ways of life! The hope of performing my promise to him, of protecting the woman he loved, had been the one thought that spurred me to struggle toward the bridge. Yet now it was not I who was shielding Madame Chenier from the brutality of the soldiers, but she who, assisted by Jacques the habitant and his wife, was aiding me. Never have I met so courageous a woman. Young, beautiful, and alone, for the little light of her child's life had gone out during those terrible days, she still had strength to devote herself to ministering to the wounded who had been hidden away by their friends. Nor could I induce her later to accept my escort to her relatives in the city of Quebec.

"No, no," she said, "I will stay here where I was once so happy, and cherish my husband's memory. Even those who believe him to have been mistaken and reckless must acknowledge that his aim was noble. Encouraged by the success of the Americans in achieving their independence, he and those who fought with him thought, if they were only fearless and self-sacrificing enough, they would surely win."

"Madame," I answered, "in Jean Olivier Chenier were united the high-hearted chivalry and valor of the old French seigneurs and the spirit that, sixty years ago, led on the minute-men of Lexington. Who shall say he gave his life in vain?"

After a few days, having measured my strength sufficiently to feel that I might venture upon a journey, I took sad leave of this brave lady. For years I have not heard of her. Yet I, and the one I love best in the world, still pray that, whether she be living or dead, God will reward her for her goodness to me. For to her care, under Providence, I owe my life.

My beautiful Feu Follet had been carried away by the redcoats. But when I sought out Monsieur Paquin in the cottage where he had taken refuge, he said to me, —

"My son, since you must go, you shall have my horse. If you cannot send him back, sell him and use the money. Here is a small purse I have for you, too. Treat it as a loan if you wish, but take it."

"Monsieur le curé, you are too good," I replied, accepting his kindness, of which I indeed had need. "Ah, after all you were right in saying the habitants were not well prepared for resistance!"

"Although at St. Benoit, St. Scholastique, and Carillon every house displayed the white flag at the approach of the troops," he answered, "the men were taken prisoners, the villages burned, and the women and children driven out homeless upon the snowfields or into the woods. But we must have courage, better times will surely come."

Setting out, I was soon riding through the forest guided only by a pocket compass, the most precious of my possessions, which consisted besides of only

the clothes I wore, the curé's horse, and three gold coins and some silver in the purse, almost all the good man had left after the fire.

"How I wish I might ride back to the Richelieu! How I long for a glimpse of Jacqueline, to hear her sweet voice, to look into her beautiful eyes, to speak a word that might bring a smile to her red lips," I said aloud, speaking my words to the snowbirds and the squirrels amid the loneliness of the thickets.

But since to return to the north was impossible, I set my face toward the southwest.

"Somewhere in that great country I may meet Ramon," I continued, communing with myself. "Together, perhaps, we may still struggle for the Patriot Cause, which I trust may yet grow strong."

Many were the adventures of my way. In order to avoid the bands of soldiers now marching up and down the province making arrests, I took a round-about route. There were, however, a few French in the region through which I passed, and these good people sent me on from one to another. Among them the repetition of the magic words *coute qui coute* invariably procured for me food and lodging.

Once I was stopped by a farmer who took me for a horse thief. To get out of the predicament, I was forced to acknowledge myself a refugee. Luckily, the man was a friend of our people.

After this I sold the horse, since there was no chance to send him back. At another time I had to strip and swim across a stream thick with floating ice, carrying my clothes strapped on my back.

Again, disguised as a farm laborer, I had the pleasure of watching a party of soldiers as they searched a house for me.

At first I kept away from the St. Lawrence, al-

though to cross it would mean liberty; but I had heard that the border was closely watched. One day, I came out of the woods to find myself near the banks of the river, just above a small village.

Before me extended the blue waters, ice-bound along the edge, but in the centre a strong sweeping current. Beyond was the sunlit American shore. Could I but reach it I should find safety, friends, and freedom.

But of what did it avail me to gaze upon that shore with such delight? I was still alone; at any moment my flight might be cut off; I had eaten nothing all day; and to attempt to swim the great stream at this season would be simply to commit suicide.

"*Eh bien*, I may as well take my life in my hands as die of cold and hunger," I said to myself.

Emboldened by my laborer's disguise, I knocked at the kitchen of a house hard by, a more pretentious place than I would voluntarily have chosen; but it was the only one in the vicinity.

As the door flew open, schooled as I was to meet emergencies, I started. For there before me stood a pretty girl whose sudden appearance sent my thoughts back to Jacquette and the settle in the living-room at St. Denis.

It was only because her curls were dark and her eyes bright, however, for she was not even French, but a handsome English girl who, brought thus face to face with an unkempt and ill-looking stranger, stared at me in frightened astonishment.

Among the habitants I had thought it no disgrace to demand hospitality, but now, I must confess, I found it hard to ask for food.

"Madame, I am seeking employment," I began, and stopped short, partly for the reason that my

pride rose up in arms, but more because I was really faint.

"I am sorry, we already have a servant-man," she said, recovering from her alarm and flashing at me a roguish glance. "But come in, my good fellow, and I'll set out a dinner for you by the fire. You are in the nick of time. We have dined well to-day, having for company an officer from the garrison at Prescott, who is now smoking a pipe with my father in the parlor. He has been sent away up here to intercept a refugee from Lower Canada, who it is thought may attempt to cross to the States at this point."

With as little show of haste as might be I drew back.

"Thank you, madame," I said, turning away nonchalantly. "I spoke only of employment. Since I cannot obtain it from you, I would better go on.

But she laid a hand upon my arm.

"My father does not entertain his guests in the kitchen, and to-day I would make one welcome here," she insisted.

I saw that the room was unoccupied. To enter, even with the knowledge that an enemy bent on my capture was only a few feet distant, was hardly a greater risk than to seek to return to the woods. A man who needs bread is desperate. I looked into the girl's eyes; they seemed to me kind and true. I suffered her to draw me inside the house.

My pretty hostess was as good as her word. Not since I left St. Denis had I dined so comfortably, while her bantering conversation cheered and enlivened me. Ungratefully I let many of her sallies pass unnoticed, as I debated whether I should ask her help to get over the river.

I had just got upon my feet to take leave, when

a hearty English voice called out from across the hallway, —

“Phœbe! Phœbe, I say! Here is the captain chafing because you are so long out of his sight. Egad, captain, Phœbe’s a famous housekeeper. No doubt you will find her in the kitchen.”

A younger man’s voice laughed gayly, and a firm step sounded in the passage.

Muttering an oath under my breath, I turned sharply to the girl.

But the curses which, regardless of consequences, I was about to hurl upon her for betraying me, died upon my lips.

For her face was pale as death, and I felt at once that if there was a plot to trap me, she had not known of it.

“Wait a moment,” she said in a tense whisper.

Then, springing forward, she opened the door and met the officer in the hall.

“Were you looking for me?” I heard her ask.

A ripple of girlish laughter mingled with the deeper tone of his reply, and I knew he had turned back with her to the parlor.

The chance to escape was before me. Many who read this history will think I was a fool not to embrace it.

Yet in lingering I did not ill.

After a few moments Phœbe reappeared.

“You are still here! Then you believe I did not mean to entrap you, sir,” she said, clasping my hands in her earnestness. “I knew you as the man the captain sought. But I too have been on the watch. I sent our maid-servant home to visit her people, and the man-servant lies in a besotted sleep. Luckily for you, he is fond of his cups. Our rowboat lies beside

the house. Leave it at the boathouse on the opposite shore, and it will be restored to us."

"How can I ever thank you, Phœbe?" I whispered, raising her rosy fingers to my lips.

"Do not misunderstand me," she replied. "I abhor the rebellion, but my sympathy goes out to a man who, having failed in an attempt to aid his friends, finds himself friendless. The captain is bound in honor to do his duty, but I am going to save him from the unpleasant duty of sending a fugitive to the gallows."

Bidding me exchange my coat for another which she took down from a peg in a corner, she made me tie down my cap with a gray knitted scarf that also belonged to the bibulous servant-man.

"Now go," she said, "while I return to entertain our visitor. Whatever happens, put off boldly, like one going about his affairs."

"In effrontery I have never been backward," said I.

And after pressing her hands once more I walked out.

The boat was beside the house, as she had told me. Laying hold of it, I began to shove it down the bank to the river.

While I was thus engaged the officer came out of the front door and paced the veranda.

My heart beat faster than usual, I will admit, but I continued to push the boat, at the same time stealing a glance at him. He was a good-looking fellow, and his appearance was strangely familiar.

In another moment I recognized him, and my astonishment almost betrayed me. He was Captain Weston, whom Ramon had arrested at St. Denis, the prisoner whose plight had aroused Jacquette's sym-

pathy, the man whom Dr. Nelson had sent to St. Charles, where, probably, at the arrival of the soldiers he had regained his liberty.

"What ho! Who are you, and what are you doing there?" he cried out, and I heard the click of his pistol as he covered me with it. But I kept on, as one deaf.

At this critical moment Phœbe, wrapped in a red cloak, came out of the house and spoke to him.

"Captain, *please!*" she cried. "Do you want to frighten our old servant out of his wits? Peter has no more hearing than a post, and he is not over clever. If you object to my sending him across the river to buy some bits of woman's finery which cannot be had in the village, I will recall him."

"Oh, if the man goes on an errand for you, Phœbe, I have no wish to restrain him," answered the captain, lowering his weapon, "but I thought—"

"Yes, I know, you officers will see a political refugee in every country bumpkin until you have caught your fugitive," she answered with a laugh.

The wind fluttered the red cloak. Weston thrust the pistol into his belt again. What he said I do not know, but I saw that his thoughts were of Phœbe now.

As I pushed out from the shore, she began a merry dispute with him. Presently I was well in the current. I could see the girl's scarlet cloak as she and the captain walked up and down the veranda. He had apparently forgotten both the boat and the boatman. A few days later, I dare say, the report went to headquarters that no refugee had crossed at this point; for Phœbe, I am sure, kept her own counsel.

CHAPTER NINTH

A SHIP OF FATE

STEERING the little dory through the floating ice, I succeeded in reaching the opposite shore. Here a farmer lent me a horse, for which I paid well afterwards; nor did I forget the curé of St. Eustache. The next day, after landing once more on "American soil," I reached Ogdensburg, where I was warmly welcomed, and found rest and refreshment. I learned too that large and enthusiastic meetings were being held at Albany, New York, and the cities on the chain of Lakes, at which sympathy was expressed for the patriots and money subscribed to the cause.

Disappointed at not obtaining news of Ramon, however, and eager to push on, I took a place in one of the sledges of the merchant train bound for the region that promised me a chance to distinguish myself.

It was a clear, crisp morning. The sunlight on the snow was fairly dazzling. The drivers, in their fur coats and caps, stamped about with their heavy raw-hide boots, and cracked their whips as they awaited the signal to start. The strong, deep-chested horses, as impatient to be gone as were the men, tossed their handsome heads and pawed the snow, while all the bells of their harness tinkled, and the scarlet streamers that tied their braided manes fluttered gayly.

Enlivened by a cheer from all the boys of the town, we at last set out.

During the days that followed when, wrapped in bearskin robes, I was borne swiftly across the icy crust of the snow; or in the evenings when I sat in the bar of some hotel where we put up, my thoughts often wandered on in search of my comrade or reverted to the time when we were together at St. Denis.

Still I marvelled at his forwardness in snatching at the mission to St. Albans, his eagerness to leave the Richelieu; and still I could discover no reason for his strange conduct.

Naturally, from these cogitations my reverie turned to Jacquette. I recalled how piqued she had been at his going away so willingly, and at last a solution of the enigma dawned upon me.

"Yes, that is it," I said to myself. "Ramon must have discovered Jacquette's girlish fancy for him. In the beginning I thought his heart was stirred by her beauty and goodness, even as mine was. Evidently I was mistaken; he felt for her only the admiration of youth for a pretty and charming girl. He did not love her; therefore he felt bound to go away.

"Another man might have lingered, accepting the flattery of her innocent affection, basking in the sunshine of her smiles, yet giving nothing in return. But Ramon was the soul of honor. The name Rycerski signifies 'knightly,' and never was chevalier worthier of the title. If Jacquette imagined in his courtesy a tenderer significance than the language of compliment, it was not his fault, I know." Nevertheless, I was actually inclined to be angry with him for not loving her. "He is hard to please, indeed," I soliloquized scornfully, feeling myself her champion. "Is there in the whole world another girl so beautiful,

so lovable, and so warm-hearted as Jacquette? He is not worthy of her. Ah yes, he is — there's the pity of it. He is and she knows it; therefore his departure wounded her cruelly. It must be that his word was pledged before he came across the sea. In Poland, perhaps, or one of the capitals of Europe he met and loved some noble woman. Brave Jacquette! With what spirit she strove to conceal her sadness, yet her apparent indifference and gayety were but as the jewels and laces beneath which many a sweet woman hides an unhappy heart. Ah, how true is the saying, 'Love one who does not love you, answer one who does not call you, and you will run a fruitless race!' Here am I loving Jacquette with all the strength of which my nature is capable, yet she cares not at all for me, but for Ramon, who does not love her. What a play it is, half tragedy, half comedy!"

I made up my mind to one thing, however.

"If I come through the war unmaimed and with my health," I decided, "I will go back to Jacquette and tell her of my great love. I will be patient, and after a while her love may turn to me. Had any one else come between us I would have hated him. God help me, I am insanely jealous as it is. But how can I hate my friend because he has involuntarily won the treasure I long to possess?"

After a week of travelling I reached Fort Schlosser on the Niagara River near the town of Buffalo. It was late in the evening.

"Is there a boat in which I can take passage to Navy Island, where William Lyon Mackenzie, leader of patriots of Ontario, is drilling volunteers?" I asked of the keeper of a tavern on the water-front.

"The Caroline, lying at the wharf below, will go over in the morning," he said.

I lodged with him, therefore. Sleep came readily enough, but some time in "the wee sma' hours" I was awakened by a voice crying through the darkness outside, —

"Boat ahoy? Answer or I fire."

It was the sentinel of the Caroline challenging some one. I rose, and groping about, began to get into my clothes.

"The countersign? Halt! I must have the countersign!" continued the guard.

"Hush, I'll give it to you when we get on board," came the answer, cautious and low, "there are British boats close by."

As I peered through the window I saw the outline of a rowboat astern of the steamer.

The report of a musket broke the stillness of the night, and the next moment all was uproar on the little vessel.

By this time I was dressed. Thrusting my pistols into my belt, I ran down the stairs and out to the wharf, on which the other lodgers of the house and the few neighbors also gathered. Few of them were armed. We, who were, fired into the gloom. A party of redcoats were trying to land after an attempt to deceive the sentinel, but as we heard, rather than saw them, our shots had little effect, I fear, except to drive them back momentarily.

Before we had time to reload they leaped upon us, being more than three times our number, and forced us back at the point of their swords.

Upon the steamer the crew made a gallant fight. They were finally overpowered, however, and forced ashore.

"My God! What are the enemy going to do next?" exclaimed the man who had fought next to me, as



"Enveloped in a sheet of flame and drifting rapidly down the current."

Page 97.

we were driven against a wall, where short work might have been made of us but for the darkness.

"They are casting off the steamer's moorings," I said.

Other villagers, aroused by the firing, came running to the spot. Already the redcoats had cast off the *Caroline*, and presently she began to float down the stream.

A few minutes more and a lurid light shot from her lower deck and began to climb up her sides.

"They have set her on fire, and there are wounded volunteers on board," cried my companion, in horror.

Now she was enveloped in a sheet of flame and drifting rapidly down the current.

It was an awful scene, — on the shore a handful of men who had plunged into a fight before they were more than half awake and been worsted by the force of numbers; the blackness of night, which lay like a pall upon the water rendered the sky invisible and aided the escape of the invaders, who had at once taken again to their boats; and the doomed vessel, at first a spectral shape of smoke and now a blazing meteor, drifting onward with its already dead and dying men.

Presently, by the light which now shone from her, we saw that she had stranded in a bed of rushes. Before long she drifted loose again and forged down the river, a ship of flame which became like the reflection of a star upon the water in the distance.

Then, as we watched her in dazed horror, all at once her burning hulk disappeared as suddenly as though the spirits of the deep stretched up and dragged her down beneath the swirling rapids.

Something as terrible did indeed happen. Borne onward by the mad waters which every moment

gathered strength and passion, she had leaped with them over the brink of the Great Falls of the Niagara into the abyss of mist and rock and spray, like the Indian goddess Papukee, the lightning, leaping into the arms of her lover the Storm Cloud.

It was a grand sepulture for the volunteers whose funeral pyre the burning craft had been, a tomb in the sublime chasm with the stupendous ice-bridge formed by the frost and mists for their monument.

The next day I got over in a rowboat to Navy Island and had my interview with Mr. Mackenzie. I was surprised to find the lion of the Patriot Cause, as he was called, a small man with reddish hair and beard. From his reputation for boldness and activity I had fancied him a giant.

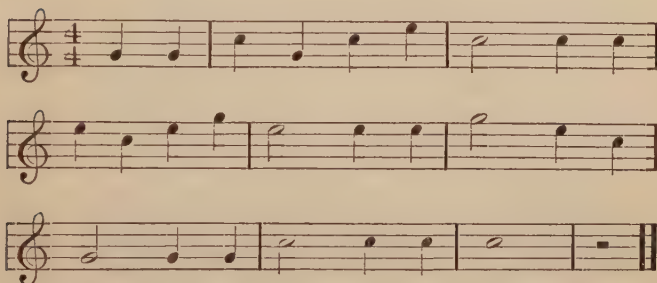
"Major Adair," he said, giving me the title by which I soon became known, "the violation of the neutrality laws in this burning of the *Caroline* will start a conflagration throughout the United States. After you have told the story of *St. Denis* and *St. Eustache* in this vicinity, I want you to repeat it farther up the Lakes."

A week later, accordingly, I set out for the city of Detroit, which was settled by French chevaliers from Montreal more than a hundred years ago.

Again the journey was to be by sledge, but this time the horses had neither bells nor trappings, and our train departed as quietly as possible.

We had not gone many miles before I discovered the reason for this absence of ostentation. Under the robes and blankets of every sledge were secreted as many muskets and as large a share of powder and bullets as could be thus carried. During the days when we proceeded along the shore of Lake Erie and thence up the American bank of the Detroit

River, we left a supply of these warlike presents at many farmhouses, and the farmers hid them in the cellars or garrets.



It was late in the afternoon of a January day when the conductor of our party awoke the echoes of the leafless woods with the notes of his horn, as a signal that we were approaching the frontier town of the old seigneurs.

"The sledges, the sledges, from Sandusky," vociferated a rabble of urchins, bandying their news in French and English, as they swarmed around our cavalcade.

Several blanket-coated, fur-capped idlers, who lounged by the tavern wall in the last rays of the sunshine, woke up and ran toward us.

Our drivers flourished their whips.

"Whoa!" they cried to their horses.

The snow crunched under the runners of the sledges, and the train drew up before a peaked-roofed two-story inn, over which was the sign in large letters, "Woodworth's Steamboat Hotel."

A small wiry man, whose swart skin and shock of black hair proclaimed him a French Canadian, rushed out to receive the other two passengers and myself.

"Ha, ha, it is a hard journey up the Strait," he said with bustling politeness. "*Maintenant, les m'sieurs* will find a fire and a mug of *cidre au charbon* or a *petit verre* good, after the wind has cut like a whip all the way from Sandusky. The dinner will be served in one quarter of an hour."

Glad enough we were to alight and stretch our limbs.

I was, however, in no hurry to enter the house, but lingered to the last. When the smiling waiter who had welcomed us turned toward me I called out to him.

"Toussaint!"

The little Frenchman started as though shot, and stared at me with widely dilated eyes.

I nodded to him, reassuringly, and he broke out into a volley of delighted exclamations in his native tongue.

"M'sieur Adair! Do I see him in the flesh? We have heard he was killed at St. Eustache."

"Happily, I am still very much alive, Toussaint," I said, laughing to conceal my emotion, as the warm-hearted fellow actually embraced me. "But how comes it you are so far from Chambly?"

"Ah, m'sieur, Louisonne is *bien sage*," he explained with a sigh, which might be taken as an expression of content or dissatisfaction, as one chose. "After the redcoats raided the village hoping to capture m'sieur and M'sieur Rycerski, who were known to have rescued the two patriots, she said, 'Toussaint, you are so brave you will be going off to fight unless I take care of you and 'tit Louison. I have cousins at Le Détroit. We will go there.' It was a long voyage, but Louisonne is not to be daunted, m'sieur. We got across the country to the St. Lawrence without going to Montreal, and once on a batteau we were safe. So now I am a waiter as well as a barber. Says Louisonne, 'Let the patriots serve the cause

and you serve the patriots. Is it not the same, *mon ami*?' What thinks m'sieur?"

"I think Louisonne is a wise woman, and it is certainly pleasanter to be in Le Détroit than under the snows at St. Denis or St. Eustache."

"Ugh! Will m'sieur come in where it is warm?" stammered Toussaint, with a shudder.

Laughing again I followed him into the bar.

Here the great hearthfire, the sanded floor, the small tables, and the row of gleaming decanters and glasses attractively arrayed, presented a picture of comfort a traveller could hardly fail to appreciate after having been long on the road.

"Welcome, gentlemen," roared "mine host," old Ben Woodworth, rising from his chair by the chimney and putting aside his pipe.

He was a broad-shouldered, gray-haired man of about sixty years of age with firm lips, and eyes that now beamed with kindness, but might on occasion blaze up with anger.

When we were thawed out we proceeded to the dining-room. It was rude, indeed, but the same could not be said of the dinner whose especial glory was a plump, wild turkey, for which game the locality is noted. Never, even at Christmas, do I desire a better feast.

As I was too fagged out to wish to linger downstairs, Toussaint showed me to my quarters.

In going thither we passed a very spacious drawing-room.

"It is also used for patriot meetings," he significantly told me.

The carpets of the hostelry were not of velvet, but three-ply, softened by heavy linings of hay. The furniture was of pine, not mahogany. At table the

forks were steel, not silver, the knives had bone handles, and all the appointments of the place were absolutely plain; yet every room had its guest year in and year out. The old hotel was famed through the pioneer west of that day.

"M'sieur will be pleased to hear that the town is all for our people who are fighting for independence," continued my valiant barber and waiter, as he put another log into the wood stove by which my room was warmed. "Last night the manager of the theatre gave all the money he took in at the play to buy arms and ammunition for the patriots. Not long ago, too, the armory was broken into and five hundred muskets were taken by the volunteers."

"Then not only the descendants of the seigneurs who settled here a century ago, but others are interested in our struggle?"

"Others? *Ma foi*, it is so," continued Toussaint in French. "Why, all the people of the north-western frontier are with the patriots heart and soul. The young men want to enlist at Navy Island. Not only Dr. Theller, a countryman of m'sieur's, but the mayor and many prominent gentlemen of the town are hot for our cause; the United States marshal finds it well not to see many things, and some say even the governor is in sympathy with us."

"Toussaint, I am glad to know all this," I said.

While we spoke the sound of music arose from the bar, a man's voice singing in a clear rich baritone.

"It is Mr. Sam Woodworth, Mr. Ben's brother," Toussaint ran on. "He made the song he is singing, and the guests like it, for it gives them a chance to join in. But m'sieur will excuse me, I must go. There may be more news to hear, and *parbleu*, as Louisonne says, it is well to keep one's ears open."

When he was gone I seated myself by the stove, for though weary, I was not inclined to retire. He had inadvertently left my door ajar; I did not rise to close it. The merriment below buoyed up my spirits, and anon there were borne to me on the air, fragrant with the piquancy of the various ingredients that went to make up a cordial for which old Ben was renowned, the words of the song, trolled by its author to a little knot of friends in this western tavern, but since become known far and wide.

“How dear to this heart are the scenes of my childhood,
When fond recollection presents them to view!
The orchard, the meadow, the deep tangled wild-wood,
And every loved spot which my infancy knew.
The wide spreading pond, and the mill that stood by it,
The bridge and the rock where the cataract fell,
The cot of my father, the dairy house nigh it,
And e’en the rude bucket that hung in the well.”

Then came the chorus, rolled out by heavy voices, several of which were musical,—

“The old oaken bucket, the iron-bound bucket,
The moss-covered bucket that hung in the well.”

“That moss-covered vessel I hailed as a treasure,
For often at noon, when returned from the field,
I found it the source of an exquisite pleasure,
The purest and sweetest that nature can yield;
How ardent I seized it, with hands that were glowing,
And quick to the white-pebbled bottom it fell;
Then soon, with the emblem of truth overflowing,
And dripping with coolness, it rose from the well.”

Again the swelling voices took up the melody,—

“The old oaken bucket, the iron-bound bucket,
The moss-covered bucket arose from the well.”

"How sweet from the green mossy brim to receive it,
As, poised on the curb it inclined to my lips ;
Not a full, blushing goblet could tempt me to leave it,
The brightest that beauty or revelry sips.
And now, far removed from the loved habitation,
The tear of regret will intrusively swell ;
As fancy reverts to my father's plantation,
And sighs for the bucket that hangs in the well."

"The old oaken bucket, the iron-bound bucket,
The moss-covered bucket that hangs in the well."

The singers who thus celebrated the joys of temperance even while they sipped the strong punch of old Ben's brewing at last were silent. The frequenters of the tavern departed ; the guests tramped upstairs to their rooms. Gradually the house became quiet, except for the sonorous echoes aroused by those who slept audibly. But still the refrain of the song lingered in my mind.

"The old oaken bucket, the moss-covered bucket that hung in the well." Its melody lulled my senses. Not until several hours afterwards, when I awoke to find my fire gone out, did I realize that I had fallen asleep in my chair.

CHAPTER TENTH

A DASHING CAVALIER

ONLY half a mile of blue water, the beautiful, swift-flowing Strait, separates the American city of Detroit and the Canadian town of Windsor. From the earliest settlement of the river banks a ferry has plied between the two shores whose inhabitants are as neighbors, meeting every day and transacting business together. In many cases also they are united not only by friendship, but by the ties of intermarriage.

The two places being thus closely connected, and there being no regular garrison here on the British frontier, it is not surprising that the four hundred English refugees in Detroit who favored Canadian independence, and other enthusiasts, looked forward to an invasion of Canada from this point. Into this secret I was admitted on the evening succeeding my arrival, after I had repeated my story of St. Denis, St. Charles, and St. Eustache at a meeting in the Steamboat Hotel.

The leaders had counted upon the river being frozen over, as usual at this season, since men and field-pieces would have to be transported on the ice. But unluckily for their plan, the Strait remained open in the middle of the current. As no preparation had been made for water-craft, the whole project was now changed. The refugees and their allies, hardy volunteers from the border, were ordered to gather quietly

at Gibraltar on the American shore and descend upon Malden opposite, at the mouth of the river, where there was a regiment of militia under the command of one Colonel Prince. The attack was set for the eighth of January, the day so celebrated in the annals of heroism as the anniversary of the battle of New Orleans.

On the morning of the sixth, when Toussaint came to my room to shave me, which he did as a special favor, he chattered parrot-like as ever, yet there was about him an air of mystery that he made sure should not escape my notice. More than once, posing solemnly before me, he laid the bony forefinger of his right hand against one side of his nose and winked at me significantly. Again, he strutted about with a martial mien, at the same time keeping his glance upon me "out of the tail of his eye," as he would have said. Frequently he chuckled to himself or broke into an abrupt laugh. Yet all I could get out of him in explanation of this extraordinary conduct was, "Ah, m'sieur will see. We shall soon have fine doings, eh?"

During the forenoon I watched a little schooner called the *Ann* head down the Strait, her white sails gleaming in the sunshine, and I knew she had on board the refugees, well equipped for service, and a supply of arms and provisions. In the course of the day a scout brought word to the city that if these men succeeded in capturing the fort at Malden the people would rise in revolt along the Canadian shore from the Lake of Ste. Claire to Lake Erie.

I now set off down the côte, therefore, resolved that, so soon as the new standard should appear floating above Malden, I would cross over and offer my sword for further service to the cause. I reached

Gibraltar before the Ann, and the same evening, as I sat in the bar of the tavern conversing with the other guests, the landlord hastily entered from the kitchen.

"Gentlemen," he cried in excitement, "a habitant has just brought in news that several Indian chiefs, known allies of the British, have been seen on this side of the river in full war-paint. Alack, alack! the Red Dwarf, the demon of the Strait, showed himself last night, too. His appearance always portends disaster!"

"Nonsense! Have the messenger in and let us hear his story," said I.

The Frenchman was not slow in responding to the call. A sallow, keen-eyed fellow in elkskin trousers and fur coat and cap, he looked the very picture of an old time *coureur de bois*.

"M'sieur," he began in French, turning to me when I had addressed him in his own language, "three Hurons, led by one Magee, have come across from Malden to make trouble and thus keep the Americans at home. My wife saw them. They went toward the Indian villages near Flat Rock."

"Merciful Heaven!" interrupted the landlord, wringing his hands. "Are the horrors of the days of Pontiac, the massacres of the River of the Vineyards to be repeated?"

"No!" I declared, starting to my feet and turning to the men about me. "Friends, what do you say to following up the trail of the redskins?"

"Agreed!" they answered with one accord.

I chose only six hardy young men.

"We must be fresh for the adventure," I said; "therefore we will take a short rest, breakfast, and then sally forth."

Long before dawn we set out, well armed, carry-

ing two days' provisions, and with Campau the habitant as our guide. The night was dark, a thaw and heavy rain had carried away the snow, and the tramp across the prairie and through the woods, whose bare boughs rattled like an army of skeletons, was no pleasant march. Soon after daylight we came to a cabin built under a knoll that protected it from the north wind. Near it a little stream of water had been deepened into a pool.

"It is the lodge of the old sachem, Split-log," said Campau.

As we paused to form a plan, an Indian girl came out of a neighboring wigwam, swinging a bucket made of cured skin or leather, and went to the spring for water. At first she did not see us, but as she turned back her eyes fell upon our party and she started in affright.

"Do not be afraid," Campau called to her in her own dialect; "we have come to speak with Split-log. Is he here?"

"You are from Malden?" she asked, so Campau told me.

He nodded. He had come over the day before and did not hesitate at the subterfuge.

The girl, suspecting no ruse, conducted us to the lodge of the chief, raised the deerskin curtain at the door, and disappeared within. Returning presently she said in English, "My father will talk with you."

My companions surrounded the cabin. I entered it. On a bear's pelt spread upon the floor was seated an old man, whose muscles and sinews seemed made of iron. A splendid specimen of his race, he was clad in deerskin and enveloped in a thin cloud of smoke, which he imperturbably blew from his pipe. As I stepped forward, he looked up at me.

"Split-log," I said, assuming to be the leader of the party of English he thought us, "I seek one Magee, a half-breed in British pay who has been sent with a message to your people. We wish to recall him. I want you to lead me to the place where he may be found."

My blue coat, cut somewhat in the fashion of a military undress uniform, and the glimpse he caught of the armed men who attended me, evidently confirmed in his mind the girl's story that I was an officer from Malden.

"I will go with you," he said laconically, in English also.

Getting upon his feet he wrapped himself in his blanket, took his musket from a corner, and going out, led the way without indicating the least suspicion of our errand.

"Magee is near the upper village. The young men and warriors have gone there to hear him talk," he said as I caught up to him. After this he continued on in silence.

It was an arduous journey for us through the forest, and when we came to the Rigolet des Hurons we found the usually narrow stream swollen into a river by the rains. We waded across it, the icy waters being above our waists. But still, through all our difficulties, the aged chief pushed on in advance with a marvellous activity and endurance.

After some three hours we neared our destination. As we approached through the woods, suddenly, like the shadow of a tree falling athwart the sunlight, a dark figure obstructed our path. It was an Indian who had been sent to summon Split-log to the council. The meeting at once showed the old chief that he had been outwitted, but red fox that he was, and

knowing that if the warriors should learn of his blunder his prestige among them would be gone, he on the instant began to dissimulate.

"What will you do at the powwow?" he asked, turning to me sharply.

"We but seek to prevent the half-breed from arousing the villages," I answered. "We want only Magee."

Split-log spoke a word to the messenger, whom we had covered with our pistols. The brave, plainly, understood no English, but at the command of the sachem he turned and began to guide us.

"Where is the conference taking place?" asked Campau in the Indian tongue.

"About two miles farther into the morass in a secret spot. I will take the white chief there," was the answer.

We pressed on. When we arrived at the great teepee built of boughs and skins, in a cleared space of the wilderness, I must confess I felt our undertaking to be a desperate one. From a short distance off we beheld through its open door the assembled warriors. In the centre of the semicircle of dark faces and glittering eyes stood a man, dressed like the others, who harangued the council.

"He is telling the Indians," said Campau, who was able to catch a few words, "that the young English queen who lives beyond the rising sun and has more warriors than there are leaves of the forest is the only real friend of the red man. He says the Yankees are bad men who want to rob them of their hunting-grounds and their horses."

Magee's back was toward us, but as he turned his head from side to side we saw that he was almost white, though his cheeks and brow were daubed with ochre and vermilion.

The warriors who faced us, seeing us approaching with Split-log, thought us friends. Luckily for us, their muskets were stacked together against the wall of the lodge. By a glance I directed my men to get between the Indians and these weapons. The next moment the orator, pausing to take breath, found me at his side.

The others sprang up, and the fact that they were trapped dawned upon them. They leaped forward to recover their muskets, only to be confronted by our levelled pistols. To be friendly was their best policy, at least until they should learn who we were, and they chose it. Though only eight men, we could have shot half of them before being overpowered. The half-breed stood glaring at us like a snared panther.

"Magee," I said quietly, "you are my prisoner. Split-log, tell the warriors in their own language that this man has lied to them. The Yankees are their friends, but soon the woods will be full of soldiers. The braves would better remain in their villages."

Split-log warily did as I commanded.

"We are surrounded by Long-Knives" (United States troops), he told them, fully convinced that we had a detachment of military in the neighborhood. "Only a fool Indian would resist. Let us offer the pipe of peace to these strangers."

After smoking the calumet with them we brought Magee back to Gibraltar.

Here the people warmly welcomed us, many saying they had feared we would never return. By this time the Ann and several small boats had come down, bringing the British-Canadian refugees, who went into camp on the prairie, but Davis, the captain of the vessel, put up at the tavern.

I was attracted to him because, with great physical strength, he apparently possessed a spirit not easily subdued.

"We had an exciting voyage down," he acknowledged over a punch of Monongahela that I ordered brought to us in the inn-parlor. "We were chased by a British schooner, which I warned off by firing a volley. Our pursuers watched us from a distance though, so no doubt we shall hear from them again."

Before long the captain and I were joined by several gentlemen from the camp. While we were in the midst of a discussion of the patriots' chances of success, there was a slight commotion outside the house. New guests had evidently arrived in a *traineau* or sleigh. A few minutes later the door of the parlor burst open and all present sprang to their feet as there strode into the room two men followed by an armed posse of militia.

The first of the two was perhaps fifty-five years of age, of good height, and his weight was probably not more than a hundred and fifty pounds. His hair, which he wore somewhat long, was the color of straw touched with silver, his pleasant eyes were gray, and though he strove to pull his smooth-shaven face down to a proper gravity, its natural expression of good-humor seemed struggling to shine forth, like a sunbeam breaking through a cloud.

The other man was much younger; in fact he appeared almost a youth. About five feet ten inches tall, he had a slender, elegant figure and a round, almost boyish face. The forehead was broad rather than high, and the brown hair fell in graceful locks about a well-poised head. His eyes, which I think were blue, were radiant and genial, yet I felt they

could also show that their owner possessed will, courage, and decision. His nose was prominent; the chin and jaw betokened force and determination, yet the expression of these features was somewhat negatived by a youthful mouth, the full lips being red and smiling. His hands were white and delicate; his feet small and aristocratic. From the deference paid him by his companions and also by our little company whom he had surprised, the younger man was clearly the chief in authority.

"Ha, ha, gentlemen," he exclaimed, drawing himself up to his full stature and throwing back his handsome head, "you did not expect me? Nevertheless I have come down to see what you are doing. I hope you can give an account of yourselves, otherwise I shall have to order Marshal Ten Eyck here to take all of you back to Detriot and clap you into gaol."

Having exploded this bomb among us, he turned to his escort and bade them to await his call outside in the bar. The sergeant of the posse hesitated. The young man met his uneasy glance with the stern surprise of one who would brook no delay in the carrying out of his orders.

"Go!" he repeated peremptorily. "I am among my own people."

The sergeant hurriedly gave the word to the men and they filed out. The newcomer threw his military hat, cloak, and gloves upon the table, folded his arms, and bent a searching glance upon the captain of the Ann.

"Come, my friend," he began, "what have you to say for yourself?"

The captain shifted from one foot to the other and averted his gaze.

"Your excellency knows I command a trading schooner," he answered quietly. "Taking advantage of the open navigation, I hope to make Sandusky and other ports of Lake Erie."

"And you, sir?" continued the authoritative stranger, addressing me.

"My name is Nial Adair."

"Have we ever met before?"

"Never before, your excellency. I am a stranger in this region, yet the fame of Governor Mason of Michigan is well known to me."

"Humph!" he exclaimed in return, "I never heard of you, sir."

With this he proceeded to interrogate the others, taking no further notice of me.

I felt the hot color mount to my forehead, and my blood boiled with anger. Where was the gracious courtesy for which this young chief magistrate, renowned for his extraordinary ability, was supposed to be noted? An aristocrat from Virginia, where was the courtliness to be looked for in a gentleman born and bred in the Old Dominion? Had I been an uncouth savage he could hardly have treated me with scanter ceremony.

Thus he went on, questioning the others, demeaning himself toward some as haughtily as he had done to me, while the marshal stood by with a scowling brow beneath which his eyes twinkled in a manner that contradicted the severity of his features.

All at once there flashed upon me the recollection of a tale I had heard at the Steamboat Hotel. Ten Eyck, although but a lad at the time of the British occupation of Detroit in 1812, had been among those ordered by General Proctor to leave the town. He had not forgotten the hardships of his exile, and though

he must perforce do his duty as a United States government officer, he was said to sympathize with the Canadians who were struggling for independence.

And the governor too? Had not Toussaint told me that his excellency was said to be at heart friendly to the patriots?

As this thought passed through my mind my rage against him cooled. Of a sudden I comprehended the superciliousness that had so stung my pride. By ignoring me this quick-witted boy governor meant to do me a kindness.

"I never heard of you, sir," he had said. "I do not know this Nial Adair," he was ready to say again if, perchance, I should get into trouble here on the border, and Colonel Prince or others over the way should appeal to him to restrain me of my liberty.

How I had misjudged him! The act, on the surface so brusque, had been chivalrous and generous, and showed a rare thoughtfulness for an official in his perplexing position. Thinking it wise to observe his warning so ingeniously given, I withdrew to the back of the room where I could observe him and yet not obtrude myself upon his notice.

"Well, well," he cried at last, having concluded his interrogatories, "rumor seems to have been officious in hinting that we should discover here a nest of plotters likely to make trouble for President Van Buren at Washington. Bah, all I find is a party of gentlemen playing dominos and piquet — is it not the fact, marshal?"

"So it appears, your excellency," replied Ten Eyck, noncommittally.

One of the company had passed word to the landlord, who now entered, poising aloft a tray laden with decanters and glasses.

"A little wine?" repeated his excellency, in response to the captain's urgent request. "Yes, for the air is cold to-night, and we must return up the côte without delay."

Pouring for himself a measure of the red-gold Madeira, and nodding to us in his lordly way, he reiterated with a smile, "A quiet party of gentlemen, whom I recommend to return peaceably to their homes as soon as possible."

He drank down the golden draught and the marshal followed his example. The governor then put on his cloak, gathered up his hat and gloves, and after a bow that for grace and condescension could not be surpassed at the court of King James, strode from the room, Ten Eyck marching after him with soldierly rigidity.

The landlord had not neglected to provide refreshment for the men outside, fresh horses were brought from the stables, and almost before we fully realized what had taken place, our unexpected visitors were on the road once more.

Whether his excellency knew that within half a mile of the tavern were encamped several hundred men resolved to attempt an invasion of Canada, I have never been able to determine. This much I can certify, however, he lost nothing in popularity by not being sharp-sighted that night. When he was gone, we at the tavern drank his health with acclamation in a new supply of the old Madeira.

CHAPTER ELEVENTH

THE SWORD UNSHEATHED

SHORTLY after twelve o'clock, when our party was about to separate, Captain Davis, who was seated by a window, started up abruptly.

"By old Nereus," he exclaimed, "a light on the river! It must be the Erie from Sandusky, bringing us volunteers and supplies."

With a cheer the company sallied forth to meet the new recruits. Not being a member of the projected expedition, however, I remained where I was. Because of the necessity for caution, the cheer was not repeated on the river bank, nor was there any demonstration from the camp.

The candles in the sconces on the walls of the tavern parlor had died down, but I continued to sit by the fire, smoking my pipe, and prepared to be an interested spectator of what might follow the return of those who had gone to the wharf.

Always on the eve of action my mind was wont to revert with a rush of strong emotion to Jacquette, the lady of my heart, to my dear comrade, and to St. Denis. So it was at present. Now the charming, piquant face of the girl I loved, and again Ramon's handsome features looked out at me from the gleaming frame of the blazing hickory wood on the hearth. The shadows cast by the firelight seemed to take on the graceful contour of "*la jolie Canadienne*,"

gowned in gray homespun as I saw her last, or the soldierly form of my more than brother in affection.

Then, as a great log burned through and fell, making a chaos of glowing embers and letting fly a little flare of sparks, these pictures faded, and instead I saw again the manor by the Richelieu, or still again the battlefield, the church at St. Eustache, and the figure of the gallant Chenier standing above his men, waving his sword, and anon leaping through the window into the thick of his enemies.

From this review of the happy or stirring days of the past which my thoughts wrote in the book of the fire, brightly or luridly according to the theme, I was aroused by a quick tread crunching the snow outside. Presently there was a step in the hallway, I heard the landlord greet a stranger, and in another minute some one crossed from the bar and opened the door of the parlor.

Involuntarily shifting my position, I turned my gaze toward the new guest. He was a man of good physique, and his alert bearing showed that he was young, but he was still muffled in his cloak and its high collar concealed the lower part of his countenance, while a fur cap, pulled well down, almost hid his eyes. A certain magnetic current, however, a confused feeling that here was some one whom I knew, caused me to spring to my feet. He on his part stood like a statue confronting me in a dazed way. Thus we stared at each other for a moment. Then he silently doffed his cap, and his cloak fell to the floor. Merciful Heaven! Had the flickering fire caused my brain to waver like its flaming light? Assuredly my fancy was playing me a trick. Was I ill? It must be so; for this shadowy form, one of those that had gazed at me from the other end

of the room, not only did not vanish now in the flood of light from the hall, but appeared more distinct and vivid.

I passed a hand over my brow and studied in unbelieving wonder the face of the man before me, a face I had but a few seconds earlier seen pictured in the fire, that had smiled forth from the shadows, the man who now stood before me in the flesh. Surely my reason tottered.

A voice, his voice, that was like no other in the world, reassured me. "Nial!" he ejaculated, "God of Heaven, Nial!"

"Ramon," I faltered.

We rushed into each other's arms, clasping each other tight like schoolboys. In his impetuous fashion he kissed me as ardently as though I were his sweetheart, and I on my part embraced him once more. Who shall say this caress of soldier-comrades was weak or womanish?

"Nial, Nial, you here!" he cried again, when, drawing back in order the better to survey me, he kept on shaking my hands and looking into my eyes.

"Ramon! For a moment I half concluded I had summoned your spirit to bear me company," I said. "You remember we sometimes speculated upon the possibility of the spirit's leaving the body during its sleep? A while ago I pictured you as dreaming of me, perhaps, in some distant camp."

"No, thank Heaven, I am really here. Strangely enough, you were in *my* thoughts, too, as we steamed up from the lake. It was the wish to make sure of a corner to sleep in that brought me up to the house without waiting to exchange civilities with the townspeople; but had my wildest imaginings hinted that

I should find you here, I should have hastened as if upon wings."

"Did any one know you were coming to the Strait?"

"Only Toussaint, our old acquaintance of Chambly, you recollect. Hearing he was in this neighborhood, I sent him a small sum of money I owed him and mentioned that I might see him soon, as I was coming to join the volunteers at Sandusky."

"His antics of this morning are explained," I declared with a smile, and went on to tell how he had amused and puzzled me. As we laughed over the incident Ramon and I at last seemed to realize that we were dealing in actualities as well as heroics. Sitting down before the chimney we opened our hearts to each other as of old, each recounting what had happened to him since we separated, and listening with breathless and sympathetic interest to the other's story.

"Now, since we have quieted down a little, we will have a negus and sandwiches," I said.

While we were discussing these, we were brought face to face with the rest of the world, once more, by the trooping back of the company who had hurried to receive the volunteers. A servant had renewed the candles, and the room now blazed with light.

Among the last of the refugees to return was Captain Davis of the Ann. He was accompanied by a man on the sunny side of forty. Tall and dark eyed, with bronzed complexion and black hair, the latter must have weighed something over two hundred pounds, and presented a magnificent appearance in his picturesque semi-military uniform, which consisted of a Kentucky hunting-shirt with garish epaulettes, and bright blue trousers. Notwithstanding his

fine presence, however, I at once took a dislike to him, for to me his handsome mouth lacked firmness and indicated a vacillating character. How far I was right in this estimate will be seen later.

"General, this is Mr. Adair, a stranger who declines to join us while we are on American soil," said the genial captain. "Adair, let me present you to General Sutherland, who is named by the leaders at Navy Island to command our forces."

I bowed but held aloof, while the others crowded around the general with congratulations, which he received with pompous ostentation.

"So, Mr. Adair, you evidently think discretion the better part of valor," he exclaimed, turning toward me, for his vanity could not brook my coolness.

The taunt cut like a sabre thrust, but I would not let him know he had wounded me.

"Sir," I answered, smiling evasively, "he who waits and gathers stones will find a time to throw them."

From that moment he and I were enemies. Ramon had stood by, glowering at the vainglorious officer whom, I could see, he disliked as much as I did. Making a sign to him to follow me, I turned on my heel and left the room.

Together we mounted the stairs to my chamber. The day was breaking as we lay down upon my couch. Soon we slept side by side, as we had slept in the forests near Chambly, in the cave above the Richelieu, and in the great four-posted bed at St. Denis.

The next day was bright and sunny. General Sutherland, whose lungs were certainly creditable, busied himself in the field of oratory, while his subordinates hastened the embarkation of his men. For

Campau the scout had brought in word that news regarding the camp having been officially set before Governor Mason on his return from Gibraltar, he was coming down the river with a strong force to arrest all concerned in the plan of invasion.

While they were leaving the shore, the smoke of the steamer that carried him and the marshal's posse could be plainly seen up the river. As soon as the refugees had crossed the boundary line, Ramon and I followed in a rowboat, and by the time the governor and his party reached the wharf, our little craft was speeding across the current at too great a distance to be perceived by them.

The expedition had rendezvoused in Canadian waters in sight of the British force on the Island of Bois Blanc. As we neared the small fleet surrounded by the brilliant sunshine, we saw a new pennant fluttering in the breeze from the topmast of the *Ann*, a large tri-colored flag with two stars and a legend which I knew was the word "Liberty." The flag was the standard of the patriots.

Ramon and I had now no hesitation in joining the undertaking, desperate as it seemed. The boats pushed on to the attack of the island, which was said to be garrisoned by about three hundred men, Indians, negroes, and volunteer militia.

"Look!" cried Ramon, pointing toward the *Ann* as we followed in the wake of the leader's batteau, "the schooner is drifting out into the lake."

It was only too true. The sails and rigging of the little vessel had been hastily put together and she was not properly ballasted.

"By the Red Dwarf, yes. She is not under the control of her rudder," I said as we watched her, "and though the decks are crowded with men, the

few sailors among them seem of no help to the captain in this emergency."

We rowed steadily, keeping our eyes still on the ship. A few moments later, Sutherland called to me over the short stretch of rippling azure that separated us from his skiff, "Major Adair, take an aide, go to the schooner, and try to bring her into action."

Of course I chose Ramon to accompany me. He had received a commission from Navy Island and was now known as Captain Rycerski. As we passed Bois Blanc a volley of musketry rang from the shore. But the shots splashed in the water far behind our boat, and we answered the attack with a derisive cheer. By this time the Ann had drifted so far into Lake Erie that we had a good pull of some three miles before us.

"Who goes there?" demanded the familiar voice of Captain Davis in a peremptory tone, as, at last, we came alongside her.

"A messenger. *Coute qui coute*," I answered, standing up in our cockle-shell craft and waving my hand to him.

Recognizing me, he lowered his lens through which he had been observing us. Clambering up the rope-ladder, we were presently on deck, a sailor took charge of our boat, and I delivered my message.

"Faith, major, you are indeed welcome to take the military command of the ship," said Davis, heartily, "but I doubt if you will find the Ann amenable to discipline. No woman could be more contrary or more bent upon having her own way."

By tacking about and taking advantage of the evening breeze, the captain was able to run between Bois Blanc and the town of Malden or, as it is now called, Amherstburg, and thus, gradually, to the head

of the island. We expected a warm reception from the fort, and this running of the gauntlet with a rickety schooner, through a narrow channel with a hostile force not more than twenty rods off, was, I admit, neither wise nor pleasant. But as the wind proved stubborn, and we knew our ship to be so, no other course was left to us.

There were two unmounted pieces of artillery on board. These we placed one on each side of the schooner, making them fast to her quarters by means of ropes. We loaded them with canister and prepared, as well as we could, for whatever might occur. The *Ann* now lay on the opposite side of the island from the point where we had left Sutherland and the little fleet of boats some hours before. The firing we had heard on the lake had ceased. Receiving no message from the general, we concluded he had landed on Bois Blanc. But we were mistaken. While we lay idly by, Campau the scout came out in a canoe with directions for us to join the forces on a smaller island, where they were to bivouac.

"But all the people have fled to Malden," I exclaimed involuntarily. "With our ninety men we can take and hold Bois Blanc until to-morrow, and then the general can assume possession."

"The general knows the place is deserted; nevertheless he bade me come out to you," replied Campau, glumly.

Unwilling to set an example of insubordination, I read the order to the men.

"The first duty of a soldier is to obey his superior officer. I shall comply with the command," I announced.

"By old Nereus, suppose we fight our way through the channel rather than tack about at this late hour?

Otherwise it will take until morning to reach our comrades," grumbled the captain.

It was a bold scheme, but I was nothing loth. Weighing anchor we once more set sail. The men, chiefly English-Canadian refugees, were well armed with bayonets and muskets, and emboldened by an indomitable spirit. Selecting thirty among them I bade these lie down on the deck. The rest I directed to remain below, but to keep in readiness to rush above on the instant should necessity arise.

The dusk was setting in, the wind was blowing from the lake toward the Canadian shore. On board we were as silent as if all were asleep. The least whisper could be heard as the helmsman steered directly toward the head of Bois Blanc. Moving slowly along we perceived that our course was arousing great excitement among the inhabitants of the mainland. Across the water came the sound of church bells ringing to gather the people together. We heard also the roll of drums summoning the militia to arms. Officers galloped to and fro along the shore, evidently to urge the farmers to resist the attack the authorities believed we were going to make upon the frontier. As we approached Malden we saw the wharves and the banks of the river lined with crowds of men who were, plainly, ready to repulse us. We were so close that we could almost hear them breathing.

"Do you mean to land?" asked Ramon, quietly, at my elbow.

"No," I answered. "There is a signal that forbids."

He peered through the gathering gloom.

"What? The waving lantern that now is gone? But there are many lanterns."

"Nevertheless it is a signal from some one familiar with the code at the fort, hazarded with the hope

that we may understand. By certain chance, no matter how, I learned two or three of the signals at Chambly. So far as I can make out it says, 'Do not land. This is not the time.' I will obey it, come what will. But hush! No one but ourselves has noticed it. Whoever our friend on shore may be, he must not be betrayed."

Again for an instant, beyond the throng, the light flashed and again disappeared. Ramon raised his head.

"I'll wager that light was waved by a woman," he said, and even in that moment of danger the fellow laughed a low, musical laugh.

I drew myself up. Even with him, for the time, I was the commander, not the comrade.

"Captain Rycerski," I replied curtly, "if I thought one of our men had a sweetheart among the enemy I should recommend his dismissal from the service as soon as possible."

He glanced at me sharply and at once became grave.

"Who goes there?" cried out some one in authority from the shore.

"This is none of your affair," I called in answer.

"What schooner is that? Are you friends or foes?"

"Look at our flag and decide for yourselves."

"Come to, or we shall fire on you," threatened the same voice.

"Fire away and be d—d," I returned, in no conciliatory tone.

A volley of musketry here punctuated the conversation. It passed over our heads, and those of our men who had never before scented gunpowder learned the strange music made by bullets as they cut through the air.

The breeze had moderated, and as our progress against the current of the river was slow, the attacking party had time to reload and again salute us as we passed another street. A rent was made in one of our sails, but no other damage was done. We sent back no response, but a hearty cheer and a protest in the sharp tapping of our drum. At a third volley, however, our men could be with difficulty restrained.

"By old Nereus, commander," cried the captain to me, "let us give them a slap!"

"Steady, men, and silence," I replied. "Wait for your orders."

From the Queen's Wharf a small steamer now put out to intercept us. We reserved our fire still, but a fourth round of shot from the town told upon us. One of our men was disabled, another slightly wounded. The sight of blood shed in conflict rouses the wolf in a man. My little band were muttering their impatience in curses, and our ship was in position to bring one of our guns directly to bear upon the crowd ashore.

"Now," I shouted, and let loose the dogs of war!

The effect of this return fire we could not tell, but it must have spread either havoc or fear. We had a fifer as well as a drummer among us, and these musicians struck up the stirring tune of "Yankee Doodle." With all possible speed the steamer ordered out to drive us away altered her course and, wheeling around, made up the river. We sent one or two shots after her and followed as if in chase, but only with the view of getting about the head of the island. We afterwards heard that she put into the shore at a point far above, where her crew and

the men who had volunteered against us took to the woods.

As for us, we soon rounded Bois Blanc, and discovering by the watch-fires where Sutherland had encamped, we made for the smaller island and landed. By this time it was nearly midnight.

CHAPTER TWELFTH

FOR LOVE OF LIBERTY

THE encampment was shelterless and comfortless. The general's headquarters were in a long shed; the men had stacked their arms and were gathered around the fires, some stretched upon the frozen ground, others warming themselves, a few cooking their provisions. The night was extremely cold and there were no blankets. Nevertheless, mirth was the spirit of the hour; the courage of the refugees, the spirit of the volunteers, had not cooled.

I formally reported, but was again ordered on board the schooner to keep watch for the enemy with Ramon, Davis the captain of the *Ann*, and twenty men. We cruised about all night without any interruption from Malden, but toward morning ran aground on the lower part of Bois Blanc, near where the lighthouse now stands, and only after great difficulty did we get afloat once more. Had there been even a few British here, we might have been picked off with ease.

By the early morning light we discovered that the garrison, in the haste of their flight, had left their supper untouched and had not stopped to so much as haul down their flag. I sent Campau in his canoe to Sutherland to tell him of this abandonment of the island, and about ten o'clock in the forenoon we saw the patriots setting out from his camp in scows and skiffs to take possession. As they made poor head-

way in this kind of water-craft, we went to their aid and towed them to Bois Blanc.

The Ann now lay between the island and the main shore. Wearied with the exertions of the past night, and having posted sentinels to give the alarm in case of surprise, we embraced the opportunity to repose, while our force in their new position on land prepared for defence.

Toward evening Campau brought me a message.

"The general wants you to sink the barge out yonder," said the scout. "He is afraid the colonel at Malden will use it to bring troops back to Bois Blanc."

"Sink the transport! That is easier to plan than to do!" I muttered.

However, we weighed anchor and attempted in the face of the gale then blowing to make our way to the foot of the island. As we neared the town, volley after volley was poured in upon us. The attack was no "boys' play" this time. A number of our men were wounded and considerable damage was done to our rigging. A sailor who was holding on to our anchor was shot in the wrist, and away went the anchor. Seeing a volunteer felled by another shot, the helmsman fled below, leaving the little ship to drift as she might. The halyards having also been cut away by the enemy's missiles, the sails could not be managed. My men were unskilled in obeying the captain's orders, the schooner continued to drift with the ice, and before long we were aground on the shore of the mainland, our deck presenting an inclined front to the triumphant marksmen of the fort.

"Let us at least sell our lives as dear as possible," cried Ramon.

The others were of the same mind. I had sent a messenger back to ask that a detachment from the island might be despatched to our aid. Cheered by the hope of a speedy rescue, we maintained our position and with much labor brought our cannon to bear upon the shore.

Another volley swept over our deck, and a number of the enemy rushed out into the river up to their waists in an attempt to board us. The moon shone bright, and we could be plainly seen, we knew, by the riflemen, while they were concealed behind the fences and the trees of the neighboring orchards.

The captain was wounded in one eye; Ramon fell dead, as I then thought, at my feet. Beside me stood a small boy, the son of one of the refugees, who had steadfastly helped us by reloading our muskets. "Another," I called to him. He handed one to me. The next moment a shot struck him, and without a moan the little hero toppled over into the water. I heard afterwards that his body was found on the shore the following morning.

All the men around me were disabled, but I held out still. Was not death preferable to surrender?

So the fight went on until, while discharging my gun, I received a blow on the head that struck me to the deck. I had the sensation of being cast into an abyss, which was really the hold of the ship. Then I lost all knowledge of what was happening around us. The next thing of which I was conscious was the sound of voices discussing me.

"He is dead."

"No, only stunned."

"See, he stirs."

I opened my eyes to find myself lying on a blanket in a cattle-shed and three redcoat officers standing

over me. As I stared into their faces I had a confused sense that I had seen one of them before. Almost at the same instant he started back, exclaiming, "Gad! It is the same!"

"Who? What?" inquired his fellow-officers, turning to him in surprise.

"This man befriended me at St. Denis," he replied. "I am sorry he is taken."

Smiling to myself even at this moment, as I remembered how near gallant Captain Weston had once been to taking me himself, I reached out a hand to him in recognition.

"Mr. Adair," he said, clasping it warmly, "you are, I regret to say, a prisoner of war. You have struggled like a brave man, and as such I hope to insure that you shall be treated. Unfortunately, I am not in command here."

His friends nodded to me kindly, and presently two soldiers, raising me between them, set off for a house near by. On the way, nevertheless, I discovered that the good-will of the captain was powerless to protect me from robbery, for the rascals promptly deprived me of my watch and money.

At the house, which had been uninhabited and was now turned into a hospital, there were no beds. A number of our poor fellows lay on the floor; several had breathed their last; others were restless with the fever of their wounds. Among these latter I beheld Ramon. At least he still lived. For this my heart was filled with thankfulness.

Another surprise was in store for me. When two lives meet how strangely destiny sometimes interweaves them before she cuts the thread and begins for each a new fabric according to another pattern!

Two or three women were attending the sufferers.

As my eyes languidly followed one of these nurses I whimsically noticed that she was young and graceful. A moment later, when she chanced to stand so that the light of the lantern fell upon her, an ejaculation of astonishment broke from me. She was none other than the sweet English girl to whose kindness, courage, and resource I owed my recent escape to the States. Another minute and Phœbe, turning, knew me.

"Sir, you here, and wounded," she cried in genuine distress. "Oh, why were you not cured of your folly by your experience as a homeless wanderer, your peril at Prescott? Was not this enough to lead you back to your allegiance to our dear young queen?"

"A subject of the queen I have never been, but if her majesty were here in Canada there would be no rebellion, for she would be both just and merciful," I stammered, "even as you are, Phœbe."

A feeling that she was fading away and I should be left in darkness stole upon me; I was giddy with pain.

"Nial Adair, I did not know it was you to whom I signalled not to land," whispered the girl as, like a sister, she bathed my aching head.

"Phœbe, Phœbe! Was it you who waved the lantern? I thought it was a patriot. Why, why did you do it? What did it matter to you whether we were taken or not?"

"Sh—! you must not talk," said Phœbe. "Of course I did not want rebels to land on our shores. Yes, rebels, sir. Also, I did not care to see brave men carried away to prison, as I told you once before. I hoped some one on the schooner might know the code, but you either did not, or else you disregarded my warning."

"We were driven ashore by the wind," I murmured. "Phœbe, you are an angel for your wish to save us."

The touch of her cool fingers upon my brow was like balm. The bullet had but grazed me, and before long I felt more collected. As she bent over me again I caught her sleeve lest she should flit away before I could ask the question that was on my lips.

"Phœbe," I said hesitatingly, "the captain — are you his wife?"

A wave of rosy color passed over her face.

"Oh, no indeed," she replied ingenuously, "I am still free. My father is an officer too, as perhaps you know. He is commissioned to inspect the various Canadian forts, and I have come down here with him. The captain was assigned to assist him. Now, Major Adair, if I have explained our presence here to your satisfaction," she continued archly, "I will go, for it is late. To-morrow I will come to see you again."

She disappeared with the other women. Soldiers came and carried out the dead. The men about me gradually forgot, in snatches of slumber, their dread of what the coming day might bring. Before a great while, lying on the floor beside my comrade and with a blanket wrapped around me, I too fell asleep. I was awakened by an untoward sensation; in fact it was no less than a thrust from the foot of some one of my captors, who thus meanly took advantage of my defenceless condition as a prisoner. At the same time a rasping voice sounded in my ears, —

"Get up, you d—— piratical scoundrel."

Aroused in this insulting manner, I sprang to my feet and my hand sought my pistols. Of course I had been required to surrender them the evening before. Angered still more as I remembered this, I



“‘Phoebe,’ I said hesitatingly, ‘the captain — are you his wife?’”

Page 134.

found myself face to face with Colonel Prince, well known along the Strait as a very ogre to the sympathizers with the patriots.

A tall, heavily built Englishman, with features that many would call handsome, he followed the law as a profession, but set much store by his authority as commander of a regiment of militia, and lived in a sumptuous manner. His present appearance was certainly ludicrous. A brace of pistols and a tomahawk graced his girdle; on his back was slung a double-barrelled musket, a long cavalry sword dangled at his side, and he held in his right hand a wide-mouthed blunderbuss.

Well might I have imagined myself visited by a nightmare, for behind him stood six or eight painted Indians who carried gleaming tomahawks. I knew I was awake, however, because among these red men I recognized several of those who a few days earlier had promised me they would stay in their villages. Well armed and guarded as the colonel was, while I was weak from all I had gone through and weaponless, he recoiled as I confronted him.

"Seize the man! Seize and bind him!" he cried to his Indians.

In my exhausted state I could make no resistance. They soon bound my arms behind my back. Taking a lantern from a half-breed, Prince flashed it into the face of my comrade, who was just returning to consciousness.

"Ha, ha, M. Marin, have I bagged you too?" he exclaimed with a hoarse laugh.

"My name is not Marin," replied Ramon.

"Indeed, eh! We shall soon see."

Drawing from his pocket a notebook, which evidently contained a description of the individual he

had named, probably furnished by spies on the border, he scanned it closely, surveyed his prisoner, and finally said with an effort at sarcasm, —

“Well, M. Marin, since you wish to preserve your incognito, will you please tell me how you desire to be addressed?”

“I have told you, sir, that my name is not Marin,” reiterated Rycerski, defiantly, “but you will find me as good a man.”

“As incorrigible a rebel you mean, eh? We shall see. Fall into line there, all of you,” he proceeded, for my companions were now, of course, all awake. “You will be better lodged in the fort — ha, ha, ha!”

At this point Captain Weston entered the room.

“Sir, I beg of you,” he interposed, “let these wounded men remain where they are for the present. When the day dawns, surely it will be time enough to move them.”

“Captain, you were sent here to assist in the examination of the works, not to take charge of my prisoners,” sneered Prince, vindictively. “As to any ill effect the night air may have upon their health you need not concern yourself. I shall hang the Yankee brigands before noon.”

I refused to march a step, however. Ramon and several of the others could not have done so to save their lives. In the end we were thrown into a cart, to be conveyed to the barracks.

By this time it was past six in the morning and just growing light. As the cart trundled down the road the townspeople turned out of their homes to jeer at us. We were soon surrounded by a hooting mob which included many negroes, and also red men, whose fierce visages were streaked with ochre and vermilion.

Not one among the prisoners had a hat or a cloak. Our clothing was still wet, for the water had washed over our little ship as she lay aground, and the air was icy cold.

When we were about halfway to the fort, the doughty colonel ordered the driver of the charrette to draw up while he himself went into the tavern. The crowd closed around us. For a while, at least, their taunts and derision had the effect of keeping our blood warm. At last, when even indignation would no longer suffice to prevent our limbs from becoming numb, fortunately for us a diversion occurred.

"Fie, for shame, to thus insult a band of prisoners!" cried a clear, girlish voice. "Make way, make way there, I say."

At the command, for a marvel, the throng parted, giving place to a woman in a red cloak who carried a pitcher filled with a steaming drink.

At the very sight of her my spirits rose, even as the lark, in the land of my birth, soars in the sunshine, forgetful of the shadows of the meadow. I forgot that I was a captive and this day might be my last. I only remembered that here was a brave and gracious woman who defied the jostling crowd, the broad jests of the blacks, the fierce glances of the Indians, and the uncouth compliments of the soldiers in order to bring us refreshment and a word of cheer. For the girl was Phœbe Foster. Truly! had the governor of the Canadas called out the women to put down the rebellion I think we volunteers would have been speedily vanquished were our fair foes all so sweet and courageous as Phœbe.

"It is only tea I have for you, gentlemen, for wine or stronger liquor would be bad for your wounds," she said, as she reached the side of the cart.

An older woman pressed after her, and together they distributed the acceptable draught. I held a cup to the lips of my comrade, who was near to fainting from exhaustion. He drank it eagerly, and the young lady refilled it for myself.

"God bless you, Phœbe," I whispered, bending close to her ear. "A word more. My friend here is a noble worker for the Patriot Cause. It is not your cause, I know, but if ever again he chances to cross your path, out of the kindness of your noble heart, be good to him, as you have been to me."

"Oh, but —" she protested nervously.

"I do not ask you to be untrue to what you consider your allegiance to your young queen," I went on hurriedly. "But if you ever have the opportunity, and war brings strange meetings, I am sure you will give Captain Rycerski something of your sympathy, and if need be, of your care."

I was prevented from saying more. Just then Prince came out of the tavern, and Phœbe vanished among the crowd. The colonel was flushed. A generous potation rendered him more arrogant than before.

"To the black hole with the prisoners," he directed.

The driver whipped up his horses, and the cart jogged on over the rough road. At the conclusion of our wretched journey we were thrown into the donjon of the fort, a room about ten feet square, below the surface of the ground. Here we were stripped and searched. With the exception of our scant clothing, any small article of value that remained to us after the soldiers had gone through our pockets was now taken away by the sergeant. Everything we had in our boxes on board the *Ann* had already been confiscated.

The black hole had, plainly, been little used since the old days of 1812, but its door was strongly locked and bolted. Chairs, tables, or beds it had none. When we wished to rest we must needs lie or sit on the floor, and the only light we had came from a chink high up in the wall. Here was a fine place wherein to philosophize upon the change in our fortunes. To be sure, if we were doomed to hang for what we had done, others would be hanged in retribution. No one among us, however, found consolation in the thought that for our sakes some other fellow might be in as miserable a plight as we now were.

I shall never forget the sufferings of this imprisonment. Twice during the day the gaoler threw in some dry bread to us. We asked for water, but for hours it was not brought. When night came the awful cold increased. Huddled in our blankets, but without fire, we strove to sleep. Amid the darkness I awoke to find poor Ramon trying to chafe my limbs. He feared I was dying.

About noon of the second day the surgeon visited us, and with him came Captain Weston.

"Major Adair and Captain Rycerski," said Weston, while his companion was examining the other men, "I cannot express to you how much I regret your sufferings and my inability to mitigate them. There is mention of sending you on. Are you able to go?"

"Where," I inquired laconically.

"Perhaps only up the *côte* to Sandwich, — perhaps to the town here in Canada that they call London."

"I will go anywhere to get out of this accursed hole in the ground," I responded savagely.

Ramon was of the same mind.

"I have brought you cloaks and caps, and a friend, having bought up some of the clothing taken from

the Ann, has sent it for your men," continued the redcoat captain. "I am sorry I cannot do more for you and them."

I knew he spoke of Phœbe, and as I thanked him for his own kindness I begged him to express my gratitude to this friend, though I did not speak her name.

"I will not say farewell, gentlemen," Weston added with feeling. "Remembering how chivalrously I was treated at St. Denis, I shall write to the authorities, telling my story and pleading for your release."

With these words he left us, being, as I soon understood, loth to witness the humiliation of our departure, which he could not prevent.

After our luncheon of bread and water, a posse of soldiers entered the room bringing a coil of ropes. With these our arms were again bound behind us, and then we were tied together, two and two, Ramon and I being thus made twin brothers in affliction.

Brought out of the donjon, we were hustled into a wagon amid the rejoicings of the motley riffraff of the town. There were seven wagons and two bound prisoners in each, except the last, where there were three. Every vehicle had also four soldiers with loaded muskets and fixed bayonets, and there were three carts in addition filled with militiamen, while twelve cavalymen were to ride sometimes beside us, sometimes ahead, as scouts.

It was three o'clock in the afternoon when news was brought by the Indians that the road up the river bank was clear. Colonel Prince gave the word to start.

"Shoot the rebels instantly if the people attempt to rescue them," he cried out to our guard.

With this grewsome order ringing in our ears we bade good-by to Fort Malden.

CHAPTER THIRTEENTH

A VOLUNTEER'S REWARD

EVIDENTLY our guards really feared a rescue, for we were hurried forward through by-ways during the whole of the first night. When we stopped for a relay of horses I discovered with pleasure that the officer in charge of the escort was a man to whom I had once lent money in Montreal. Naturally I expected he would show me, in turn, what kindness he could without infringing his duty.

Never was I more mistaken. Although we were bound, he feared to approach us save with a loaded pistol in his hand. With threats he was ever ready, and on the second day of our journey he had the unmanliness to strike one among us with his sword because the wretched prisoner was slow in getting out of the wagon.

We had endured much in silence, but when he attempted to repeat his attack upon one who was benumbed as much by age as by the hardships of the way, I cried out, "Sir, strike that man again if you dare! Unarmed as I am, you will have cause to repent it." Our eyes met, he cowered beneath my glance, and turning away, entered the tavern where we were to pass the night.

The next day, so great was the dissatisfaction of the soldiers, the officer next in grade had to take

command. Wherever we stopped for the night we were huddled together in one room, and a sentinel was posted at every window and door. When provisions were given to us we were deprived of the use of a knife lest we might rush upon the soldiers, overpower them, and make our escape. No one was permitted to speak a word to us, and the people of the inns where we were lodged were treated in a most arbitrary manner. The landlord was required to provide food for all and grain for the horses. If he refused, everything was taken by force. As the keepers of these little hostelrys were supposed to be in sympathy with the patriots, these high-handed measures were regarded as only quartering on the enemy.

As we passed through the villages the inhabitants did not apparently consider us dangerous characters. Often the women wept over our misfortune, and sometimes we heard a fervently murmured prayer for our deliverance.

After a tedious journey of five days over wide snow fields that we knew to be fertile in the summer time, we reached the flourishing town of London, on the tranquil river named by the early settlers the Thames. Here we were taken at once to the already overcrowded gaol where, with Ramon and two others, I was thrust into a cell about seven feet square, whose only ventilation was by means of a small diamond-shaped opening in the door. Through this, after a long delay, the scanty food allowed by the prison rules was handed to us.

We could not distinguish day from night except during a few hours in the afternoon when the setting sun cast a slanting ray through the grated window of the corridor between the double row of cells. At

other times we were in gloom, except when the gaoler came around with his lantern.

Occasionally, when the man had much work to do by reason of there being so many prisoners under his care, his wife took his place in bringing us our daily bread. In her womanly compassion she frequently gave us a bit of candle and lent us a book to read. For the most part, however, we were doomed to darkness, and though we could not see one another's faces, we strove by cheerful conversation to keep up our spirits.

For one thing, I pretended to be an infallible expounder of dreams, and as the others had nothing else to do, they kept me employed in interpreting for them. One peculiarity of my system was that no matter what the dream its meaning always betokened an early deliverance from captivity.

When we had been here about two weeks the gaoler's wife said to us one morning, "Gentlemen, your stay is drawing to an end. To-morrow you are to be taken to Toronto."

She was right. From her we learned there had been a plot to rescue us and the authorities were anxious to send us to a stronger prison. The next day the commander had me brought to his room and told me he was about to send us on.

"At least, sir," I said, after I had heard him in silence, "you will not, I hope, have us bound during the journey?"

Several of his aristocratic friends and a jovial British major, whom he sometimes admitted to see us, were present. After having exchanged glances with them, he said hesitatingly, "I think it is not necessary."

"Certainly not," broke out the major. "Surely,

sixty soldiers can guard fifteen prisoners without shackling them like galley-slaves."

Thus we were spared the indignity.

About noon we were marched out of the gaol; the wagons were drawn up in line before the door, and we were bestowed in them and guarded as before. Although the intention had been to keep the time of our departure secret, the populace turned out to see us, and the verandas and windows of every house were thronged with ladies who smiled upon us and waved their handkerchiefs. We bowed, smiled back at them and chatted together as if indifferent to our probable fate, a nonchalance that greatly annoyed the soldiers. After an hour's delay, our cavalcade moved on.

While we were on the way, officers and men treated us with kindness, and our good-natured major changed the position of our wagon in the line so that he might ride beside it, promising to tell us twenty rollicking stories on the way. We soon found, to our gratitude, that his object was not merely to distract our minds. His frank and high-minded nature scorned certain efforts to entrap us into a confession, which had come to his knowledge, and he nobly took this opportunity to warn us against them.

We had not gone far when an express came riding down the road at full gallop. The officers went forward to meet him, and he held a short conference with them at some distance from the wagons.

"They fear another outbreak from the people," said Ramon, "and surely these pine woods would make an excellent ambushade for the attempt at a rescue of which the gaoler's wife unwittingly told us."

Thereafter we glanced around eagerly at every

turn of the way, and every time we approached a favorable spot we hoped a party of friends might leap out from the thicket, followed by a force large enough to overcome our escort. Nothing of the kind happened, and soon after the coming of the express, our route was changed. If there was really a plot to free us it was thus frustrated.

When we reached Toronto, so great a throng turned out to get a sight of us that all the business of the town appeared to have been suspended. Some of the people shouted to us greetings of sympathy and cheer, and I think they would have aided us had it been possible. Others mocked and derided us.

When we arrived at the gaol, Ramon and I were smiling at some kindly jest by which the major strove to keep up our spirits to the last. Our cheerfulness, plainly, provoked the ire of a well-dressed man among the crowd.

"Ha, ha, hand and glove with the officers, are you?" he shouted to us, as we descended from the wagon. "Bad luck to your impudence! may you never come out of this place until the morning when you are to be hanged."

With this benediction we entered the prison. At first we were permitted the freedom of a long hall during the day, but at four o'clock in the afternoon we were locked into our cells without fire or light. In this hall we made the acquaintance of some seventy wealthy farmers, some of whom had been thrown into prison merely on suspicion of being "disaffected." Others had been seen at Montgomery's tavern, on the night of the skirmish there, but had surrendered their arms when the proclamation of the governor's amnesty was made to the insurgents.

Most of them had passed the ordeal of being kept below in the donjons for two or three weeks, and thus they duly appreciated the favor of being sent above to make room for new arrivals. The prison at this time numbered some three hundred political prisoners. We were forbidden all communication with friend, neighbor, or relative. The husband was not permitted to see his wife, even through the grated bars of his cell; the son was deprived of all intercourse with his parents. The orders were so strict that windows were boarded over, and fathers were arrested in the street for looking up at the place where their boys were incarcerated. Women were driven off by the bayonets of the guards when they lingered about hoping to catch a glimpse of husband or father.

A number of Tory gentlemen were admitted to see us, however, and though they came from curiosity they were punctiliously courteous, those in authority declaring they would advise the governor to send all the Americans in the prison back to the United States. Many of these visitors were old officers on half-pay. Though they considered us foes, we were fallen, and anything they could do to alleviate our condition without violating their duty they freely offered. Wherever we met a member of the regular service we were well treated.

After a while we were not allowed to go into the hall, but with Ramon and eight others I was placed in a larger room about fourteen feet square. Here we had to live and cook, for sometimes we were permitted to receive presents of food, better than the rude prison fare, from our friends outside. If perchance we were brought out of the cell to see the doctor, and happened to meet another prisoner in

the hall, we dared not even greet him in passing. A turnkey was always on the watch, and any one who disobeyed the rules was immediately ironed and sent down to the lower cells.

But the ingenuity of one in duress is greater even than the vigilance of his keeper. We obtained writing materials, — I will not even at this late day betray the kind soul who supplied us with them, — and occasionally in passing we were able, unobserved, to slip a very small note into the hand of a comrade.

One of the men in our room suggested drilling a hole through the wall to the next, where there were some twenty-eight of the patriots. Another had, happily, a jack-knife which he had succeeded in concealing when he was brought in. This we lashed to a broom-handle, and after much pains accomplished the feat of boring a round hole through a brick wall eighteen inches thick. The opening was not larger than a copper penny, and was so placed that it could be easily hidden.

We then began a correspondence with our neighbors which was so successful that they carried on the plan, and within a short time we had a general postoffice throughout all the rooms on that tier of cells. Later, in the same way we extended our postal service to the story beneath us. When some one among us had written what we had to say upon a scrap of paper, we would attach it to a small rod we had found in a dark corner, and after a given signal we would push the rod through the hole.

Sometimes, for a small tip, the turnkey brought us a newspaper. After we had read it with the eagerness that only those shut out from the world can know, we rolled it up tightly lengthwise, and it

went the rounds. Thus we encouraged one another and amused ourselves; sometimes, too, we planned and debated our chances of release.

In spite of the strictness of the guards, also, we contrived to establish communication with our friends outside, and had many telegraphic signals. Luckily our window was not boarded; one of us was ever secretly on the lookout. It was always a woman who came — God bless her! Who she was we could not discover, for she invariably wore a veil. But so cleverly did she manage that she was never detected. In my experience I have ever found women more adventurous than men.

But alas, we soon found there were spies in the different rooms, and through them some papers of mine, intended for one of the prisoners, were handed over to the commander, and I and several of my hapless companions were put into chains.

So the winter dragged away. On the last day of February, when the turnkey came in, as was his custom, to sell us food, he was in an elated, brag-gadocio mood.

“Lud, sirs, there’s been great doin’s,” he cried with a leer — he had evidently been celebrating the event over the winecup — “there’s been a big battle down at Lake Erie at a place called Fighting Island, they say, and another at Pointe au Pelée. Hof course our militia drove the rabble of refugees and Yankees into the lake. Gad, we shall have a new batch of prisoners, I’ll wager. Hic — hic — the price of provisions is goin’ up, sirs. ’Ow is a man to live if he does not charge a round sum for ’is trouble? Thank you, sirs! Gad, I ’ope your friends will have a little change in their pockets when they arrive.”

Of the new prisoners General Sutherland was the only one brought to Toronto. He had surrendered on the ice near Sandusky. Having been captured after the passage of the law that citizens of the United States taken in arms against Canada should be tried by court-martial, he was not lodged with us but in the garrison.

On the morning appointed for the assembling of the court, Tummas, the turnkey, was brimming over with news for us.

"Lud, sirs," he began, "your doughty general 'ad han hinterview last night with the governor, Sir Francis Bond-Head, so 'e did — and 'e tried to persuade the governor, that hit would be habsurd to convict 'im. Sir Francis prides 'isself hon 'is politeness, so with the hutmost courtesy 'e hassured the general that 'e might has well brace hup for hif not shot he would certainly be 'anged, ha, ha, ha! Gad, sirs, the Yankee fooled the governor, though. Last night, while his guard noddod, 'e opened a vein in each of 'is feet and another in one hof 'is arms. 'E carried the jest farther than 'e hintended, hi'll wager, — hand 'e his hin the surgeon's care. But there will be no court-martial to-day. Ha! ha! ha!"

CHAPTER FOURTEENTH

TRAITOR OR FREE LANCE ?

WHAT was to be done with us was a question my comrade and I often debated together. It was answered in part one evening in the spring when the commander of the prison came into our room.

"Here is something of interest to you, gentlemen," he said, handing to each of us a folded paper.

When he was gone I opened mine and read as follows:

"Whereas Nial Adair, of the township of Malden in the western district, not having the fear of God before his eyes, and instigated by the devil, not weighing the allegiance he owes her Majesty the Queen, did on the ninth day of January traitorously assemble with wicked and designing men to the number of five hundred and upward, armed with swords, pistols, muskets, cannon, dirks, bowie-knives, and other warlike weapons, and traitorously devised the death of her Majesty, and with force of arms did then and there —"

The document went on to detail, from the Tories' point of view, our attempt to get past Malden on the Ann, and the assembling of the refugees on the island.

"The charge against me is a grave one, certainly," I said, re-reading it to my companions, "my enemies are generous to give me a home at Malden; but how

could I possibly devise the death of a little girl just come to the throne in England, three thousand miles away? It is past enduring that I, who have always been noted for my love of the ladies, should be accused of such ungallant conduct."

At this my fellow prisoners laughed heartily. None of the others taken on board the schooner were mentioned, unless possibly as numbered among the five hundred wicked and designing men supposed to be in a conspiracy to rob her dear little majesty of her life, and to set at naught her will, her crown, and her sovereign dignity.

"But, Ramon, you have not shown me your paper," I exclaimed, suddenly struck with his reticence.

"It is nothing," he replied. "I am not to be tried at present; so, Nial, we must devote all our time to the preparation for your defence."

I was not to be deceived by his attempt to thus divert my attention.

"Fair play," I said, pretending to speak lightly. "You have just learned what a desperate character is Nial Adair. Now you must let me see what sort of a villain Count Rycerski is made out to be."

Knowing I would not be put off, he gave up the paper. Every word written therein seemed to burn itself upon my brain. Having come to the end of it, I sat down on the wretched pallet that served me for a bed and buried my face in my hands.

The news that I was to be tried for my life I had received with a sense of actual gladness. Feeling that I could not be convicted of treason where I owed no allegiance, and conscious that I had carefully refrained from violating the laws of my adopted country, I confidently looked forward to having my liberty restored to me. But the present intelligence,

which my comrade had endeavored to conceal from me a while longer, came as a blow that, figuratively speaking, stunned and cast me down. It bade him hold himself ready to be removed to another prison. Where, he was not told.

We were, then, to be separated once more. While we were together the hardships of our lot had been endurable. Now, when we were to be parted, the light seemed to go out of life for both of us. The prison walls narrowed about me, the guards drew a closer cordon around him for the journey; the chances of our being free again grew fewer.

"My preparations are indeed soon made," ejaculated Ramon, "since I possess only the clothes on my back. But being ready to go is a different matter."

If we could not help each other, we made many plans. Never shall I forget the succeeding days. So dear they were to us, so precious was every moment we might yet spend together that we found the time passing too quickly, even though we were in captivity.

During this interval, two of our companions, Colonel Lount, once a member of the Canadian parliament, and Peter Matthews, a wealthy landowner, were convicted of treason and condemned to execution. When they returned to the prison it was to be chained anew. Over our parting with them I will draw a veil. Their sentence was carried out a few weeks later. There are some tragedies so painful that we cannot look them in the face.

Nothing was proved against Montgomery except that as an innkeeper he had sold food to the insurgents gathered before his tavern at a short distance from Toronto. Yet for this his property was con-

fiscated and he was sentenced to be transported to Bermuda.

On a dreary morning in the first week of May, the commander sent for me. My comrade and I exchanged a few words and a handclasp, yet we both supposed I was summoned only to see the doctor, for I was ill with a pleurisy contracted from the cold and dampness of the building.

I expected to return in a few minutes; but I never went back to that room. Notwithstanding my petition that Ramon and I might be left together as long as possible, I was placed in a small cell by myself, there to await my trial. He and I had thus no opportunity to wish each other *au revoir*, or even to say farewell. A short time later I learned that he had been sent on his solitary journey. And this was the darkest day of the many I spent in prison. How my own prospects were regarded I soon heard from the gaoler.

"Well, Tummas," I said one day when he brought me my loaf, "you have entertained me a long while; some time, perhaps, I may be able to give you a better feast, when I again have a home in the States."

"Ay, ay," blurted out Tummas, as he shut one eye and surveyed me quizzically with the other, as if my remark were an excellent jest. "But hi 'm hafeard, sir, *you* will never see the States again."

"Indeed! And why do you think so?"

"Hoh, hi 'ave hit from good hauthority."

"Then they intend to hang me?"

"Yes, sir, hi 'm sorry to say, you must be 'anged. Hi 'eard the governor say so yesterday to han hofficer who came with 'im to see the commander. You see, sir, hit must be done has an hexample to hothers, you hunderstand, sir?"

"So my fate is settled even before my trial?" said I, indifferently. "Yet mind what I say, Tummas, I shall not be hanged, but shall return to my country a free man."

"Hi 'ope so, sir," replied Tummas, rather crest-fallen. And disappointed that his news had so little aroused me, he slammed fast the wicket through which he had handed in the bread, and went away.

A week later, coming in the morning as usual, he said, —

"Major Hadair, sir, this his the day set for your trial."

When I had breakfasted he knocked off my chains and requested me to walk out of the cell. Under a strong guard I was taken to the court. The hall was already filled with people, but as I glanced around me, up to the galleries, among the throng of men and women my eyes caught sight of no familiar face. Nevertheless, as I entered the prisoners' dock and stood before the chief justice, a murmur of interest with a faint undertone of sympathy passed over the crowd.

"Nial Adair," cried the officer of the court in a loud voice, "listen to the charge preferred against you for the offence of high treason toward Her Most Gracious Majesty, the Queen of Great Britain, Ireland, and the Colonies, and answer whether you are guilty or not guilty?"

It was read and I nerved myself to reply.

"My lord," I said calmly, addressing the judge, "as you see, I have no counsel and have had no opportunity to prepare for trial. Further, since I have never resided in Malden, I am not the person mentioned in this charge."

At this the attorney-general sprang to his feet. He was a man of large frame, his countenance was bloated and expressionless, and a broken nose had earned for him throughout the province the satirical pseudonym of "handsome Kit."

"My lord, the prisoner is bound to be prepared," he insisted. "The prisoner has already cost the government a considerable amount; the crown witnesses are present. We will admit the statement that he is a citizen of the United States, that he was first fired upon by the townspeople at Malden, and was later driven by the elements upon our shores."

These points being recorded the chief justice decided that the trial should continue, the jury was empanelled, and two gentlemen of the bar volunteered to put my protest into legal form.

"We would gladly assist you farther, sir," said one of these men, "but I fear the attempt would be useless, and it would only ruin our business."

Staggered by this announcement, yet not plunged into despair, I listened while the prosecution presented their case. The witnesses against me swore I had borne arms and fought at St. Denis, St. Eustache, and Malden, that I had addressed public meetings in behalf of those whom they were pleased to call rebels, and had given money to relieve the distress of Canadian refugees.

These accusations, even if proved, would be hardly enough to condemn a man to death, but the attorney-general made the most of them. In his impassioned speech to the jury he depicted me as a traitor, a pirate, a robber, an inhuman monster, and last and worst of all, a *Yankee*. After a burst of eloquence that took up over an hour, he finally sat down,

heated, but smiling triumphantly, as he mopped his forehead with a large red handkerchief. He was confident he had obtained my conviction. So assured of my impending doom seemed every one who had to do with the case, that I might not have spoken in my own defence at all, but for something that happened during his harangue.

A slight stir at the door of the court room caused me to turn my gaze in that direction. Surely my eyes played me a trick! The thought that had haunted me of late so constantly must, by some psychic phenomenon, have taken visible form before me.

A redcoat officer was entering the room, and as the throng gave way to permit him to pass, I saw he escorted a lady. A second glance at him caused me to start with surprise, for he was none other than Captain Weston. I had now at least one friend in this assembly the majority of whom waited so eagerly for my sentence. But the lady?

It was she who made me feel I must be dreaming. As she hurriedly followed the captain to the place he found, I stared at her in a dazed fashion, forgetting judge and jury, forgetting where I was and that I was being tried for my life. Heedless of all around me, and deaf to the strident voice of the prosecutor who was doing his best to argue that life away, I drew a hand across my eyes, thinking to brush aside the hallucination, but it still remained.

"My God! have the long weeks of brooding and privation through which I have come overthrown my reason?" I thought. "Am I going mad? It must be, for the happiness of the vision before me is too great a blessing to be true!"

The trim, girlish figure gowned in gray, with a little toque of gray cloth set upon the dark curls

clustering about a white neck, graceful as the stem of a flower, the lovely young face, the eyes raised for a second to the captain's and then instantly lowered again as she took the chair he drew forward for her—ah, this indeed was the picture of Jacquette that had been with me sleeping and waking during the greater part of the time of my imprisonment. In fact I had loved to conjure it up when alone ever since the day I took leave of this beautiful daughter of the patriots on the shore of the icebound Richelieu.

But of course this was not Jacquette. What would she be doing in Toronto? How could she have come here from her far-off home? How unlikely that she would be with Captain Weston, who as an officer of the Royal Dragoons represented the Tory power against which her people rebelled? The whole idea was preposterous. It could not be Jacquette.

Having seated herself, the lady, ignoring the curiosity of the crowd, and apparently unconscious of the ostentation of the court, leaned forward and looked at me.

Great God! It was Jacquette!

For a moment, across the space between us, we gazed at each other. Ah, truly I wish every poor wretch guiltless of crime, save that he has loved the cause of liberty not wisely but too well, may be sustained in his darkest hour by such a glance from the eyes of the woman he loves!

A few minutes before I had been despondent, reckless, indifferent to the climax of my fate. "Since I must die, my only remaining wish is that the sentence may be prompt and there may be no delay in carrying it out," I had said to myself.

Now, however, my strength of purpose was aroused

as though by an electric current, the newly discovered force in nature which the scientists say is destined to work such wonders. The blood rushed back to my heart and thrilled through my veins. Jacquette was near me. I could not understand how she happened to be there; but it was enough for me that she was there.

Soon, however, a shadow dimmed the brightness of the sunlight of her presence. She was with Weston. Was it possible he had wooed and won her? Certainly, if ever man fell in love at first sight, Weston had been conquered by her beauty during the short time he spent as a prisoner at St. Denis. To be sure, he had been content to beguile the time on the border with Phœbe, the brave and tender Phœbe. But the pretty English girl herself told me they were not betrothed.

Had Dr. Nelson, then, in the desperate state of his fortunes and the uncertainty as to what might be his fate, sought to insure the safety of Jacquette by giving her to one of the best men who ever wore a uniform, of whatever cut or color? How foolish I was, for those first blissful moments, in imagining Jacquette had come thus to my side in this hour of my ignominy because she loved me. What had I to do with love, I, a man with only a few more days on earth?

Jesu! Marie! How selfish I was! Did I want her love that I might cast a blight upon her whole life? Would I willingly drag down her heart with me to a felon's grave? Ought I not rather to thank God it was only friendship she felt for me? Ought I not to be glad that, having forgotten her romantic fancy for Ramon, she had doubtless given her future into the keeping of this noble Englishman?

The Patriot Cause was failing miserably, chiefly through the weakness of its leaders and the inefficiency of the preparations for the struggle. To the women of the Richelieu must be left the task of teaching the lesson of liberty to the next generation. Perhaps peace and prosperity might come by marrying the daughters of the patriots to redcoat officers as gallant as this young man.

CHAPTER FIFTEENTH

THE SUPREME MOMENT

THE unexpected presence of Jacquette in the dingy court room at this critical moment of my life, nevertheless, gave me new heart. At least I would show her I could meet my fate bravely, that I was ready to die for the cause she loved, even though I had nothing left to me in this world but my honor.

"Nial Adair, have you anything to say in your own behalf?" inquired the judge as a matter of form.

It was like the customary question put to a man upon the scaffold.

Had I anything to say? Yes, for Jacquette must remember I died worthily. I would boldly confront and arraign my accusers, and give the lie to those who were trying to swear away my life.

After one more glance at the corner where the girl sat white and still, I straightened myself, and turning to those who held my fate in their hands, addressed them.

"I have seen, gentlemen of the jury, that the last act of this farce was written before the first began, and therefore I did not intend to attempt to defend myself," I began. "Respect for my own feelings, for the friends with whom I have been associated, however, forbids me to let pass without comment the charges made against me. It has been asserted

that I am a British subject and I am on trial for high treason, a crime of which only a subject can be guilty. But if I am a British subject how can I be also a Yankee pirate, as has been announced? Moreover, what proofs have been brought forward that I am also a murderer and a robber, as you have been told with much warmth? Gentlemen of the jury, I owe no allegiance to the crown. I am a citizen of the United States. I admit, I was taken in arms, fighting for an acknowledged flag —”

“An acknowledged flag!” ejaculated the prosecuting attorney with a vindictive sneer.

“Yes. The standard was acknowledged by your late governor in sending a flag of truce to treat with the men who fought at Montgomery’s tavern,” I answered. “It was the flag of the patriots raised at Navy Island. I have never committed a piracy, nor has any one under my command. I might have challenged every one of you, gentlemen of the jury, for I know you were bent upon my conviction when you were sworn into the jury-box. This trial is, then, a mockery; a mere form of law to gild and adorn the preliminaries of my execution. Even the judge on the bench has said in public that I must be made an example of to prevent others from following in my footsteps. You may hang me, indeed, but the act will cost you dear. Had I not as an American a right to express my opinion of the measures of your government at public meetings held in the States? Truly, I was taken in arms, but your witnesses, to enhance their boasted heroism, have magnified a small water-craft into a frigate, irregular musketry into broadsides, and a fray into a battle. Had success crowned the efforts of the patriots, blessings would have been showered upon my head. We

played for a great stake, a nation's liberty, and we have lost. Your feudal doctrine, 'once a subject always a subject,' cannot be maintained. I am not a traitor any more than was Washington or Jefferson. But, gentlemen of the jury, this drama will not close with your conviction of me or with my existence; the principle involved is dear to my adopted country, and she will defend it."

As I concluded, there was a stir among the auditors in the court room, and among my guards I noticed one who, wrapt in thought, picked the prisoner's box with his bayonet, while honest tears ran down his cheeks.

"Silence, silence!" rang through the hall.

"Nial Adair," said the court when quiet was once more restored, "you are a young man of no common talent, but I am surprised that you should dare to come before me, still wearing the rebel uniform. This of itself, sir, is flagrant contempt of court." As he spoke he pointed to my surtout, still adorned with the insignia of my command.

"Pardon me, your honor," I said with punctilious courtesy, "I wear this coat because I have no other. When I was taken prisoner at Malden I was robbed of my clothing and money, and what has been sent to me since then was kept from me by order of the commander of the prison. As for these stars on my breast, could they have been easily detached, the soldiers who captured me would have torn them off. Since I have worn them in conflict and in prison, I desire to continue to wear them during the brief period I have yet to live."

Having failed to intimidate me, the judge cleared his throat and began his charge. It was brief and bitter. The jury were not out long. When they

returned and lined up, facing me, I knew my fate was sealed.

"Gentlemen of the jury, look upon the prisoner," ordered the judge, "and you, Nial Adair, look upon these twelve men who have weighed and considered the evidence against you. Gentlemen, what is your verdict?"

The foreman stepped in advance of his fellows. "Your honor," he said in a low, hesitating voice, "we find that *if the prisoner is a British subject he is guilty of treason.*"

One might have heard a pin drop in the room, so still it was. The judge, the prosecutor, and his assistants were visibly astonished by so extraordinary a verdict. At the realization that it was a half acknowledgment of my claim that I was a citizen of the United States, a murmur of joy went round the room among those whom sympathy had made my friends.

"Silence," cried the officer of the court again.

The sounds of congratulation died away momentarily while the judge remanded me to prison. But as I passed out between my gaolers, I was followed by audible good wishes and prayers from the crowd. More than all, I encountered the beautiful eyes of Jacquette, radiant with hope, and her smile as these eyes met mine made me feel there was yet a joy in life for me of which my enemies could rob me only with my last breath.

On the fourth day after my trial, however, I was again brought into court, and this sentence was passed upon me:

"Nial Adair, you shall be taken to the place whence you last came, and on Tuesday the 12th day of the coming month of June you shall be drawn on

a hurdle to the usual place of execution, and shall be there hanged by the neck until dead. Your body shall then be quartered and given to the surgeons for dissection; and may God have mercy on your soul."

Like a statue I stood and listened to the terrible words. But as the judge ceased to speak, I was almost unnerved by a cry that echoed through the room. The next moment there was a sound as of some one falling to the floor, and I heard the guard near me say to his comrade that a woman had fainted. Unhappily, I knew the wail was the sobbing voice of Jacqueline, and it was she who had slipped from her chair in a swoon.

As to my own fate I was dazed. It was the thought of my darling's distress and poignant sympathy that occupied my mind as I was conducted back to the prison. Report said my execution was to be the last, and for this at least I was thankful. The other prisoners of the uprising were to be transported to Van Dieman's Land or the Barbadoes.

One evening, shortly after my sentence, as I sat at the grated window of my cell, I heard Tummas and Peter the hangman, outside in the prison yard, disputing as to the manner in which I should be sent into eternity.

"Now, my hearty," queried the jovial Peter, who had once been a sailor on a man-of-war, "what may be your opinion of the fashion of making ready the rope?"

"By hall means hit should be soaped," declared Tummas, emphatically.

"No, no, shipmate, I see you do not understand the business," retorted Peter, laughing shrilly and with the pride of experience. "It should be slushed. D—n your soap."

"But, d—n you, I know something of these matters, too," argued the turnkey. "To do the thing neatly, soap must be used."

The hangman swore roundly.

"We will settle the question by consulting the major, himself," he suggested.

Therewith, coming over to the window, the rascal stated the case to me. After hearing both sides of the argument, I said, —

"You are right, Peter, the rope shall be slushed. I want you to have your own way about it."

"Thankee, thankee," he cried, delighted. "Your honor appreciates a man of reputation. But you must be hanged to suit yourself, sir. Gad, but it is a pleasure to do business for a gentleman like you. Long life to your honor!"

Having perpetrated this bull, worthy of one of my own countrymen, he drew Tummas away to the tavern with him, leaving me to the gathering dusk and my own reflections, which were half whimsical even in their gloominess.

During the days that followed I put my affairs in order as far as might be by writing letters to Dr. Nelson, Ramon, and other friends. This being accomplished, I strove to prepare my soul to meet my God. One thing more I wished to do. I wanted to leave a few last words for Jacquette, to assure her of my devotion and love to the end. But the thought of her so stirred my heart that, from day to day, I put off the attempt to tell her all this. It seemed so impossible for me to set down upon paper any adequate expression of the emotions surging in my breast.

One morning as I sat, pen in hand, trying to find words that would make her understand how dear she

was to me, Tummas stopped in the hallway outside my cell and said through the grated door, —

“A lady ’as obtained permission to see you, sir.”

“A lady!” I exclaimed, glancing around the wretched room. “Surely this is no place to receive a lady.”

“Lud! so hanxious is she to speak with you, I’ll wager she will not spend hany time in noticing the dust and cobwebs about you; though, to be sure, a gentleman might have better lodging,” he said with a grin. “In fact, there are two women below, one being the servant of the other, I’ll go bail.”

“Perhaps the gentle benefactress who was accustomed to signal to us had ventured into the prison to give me some last news of my friends,” I reflected. The thought was like a ray of sunlight that for a few moments of each day found its way in through the window of my cell.

“I hope you told the lady I was at home, Tummas,” I replied lightly. “Say to her now that I shall be happy to have the honor of her visit.”

Tummas grinned again and disappeared, but returned presently, followed by the strangers. Unlocking the door, he admitted them to the cell, which he locked again on the outside. “You may talk with the prisoner for ten minutes, ma’am,” he said, and went away.

The servant-maid stood staring about her in dismay at her temporary incarceration and then darted to the window to peer into the courtyard. As I stood bowing before the lady, she raised her veil and looked at me, all her soul shining in her eyes.

“Jacquette!” I exclaimed, starting forward in amazement.

The fair unknown who for weeks had cheered us



“‘I remembered only that I loved her and she was come to comfort me.’” *Page 167.*

by appearing almost daily beneath our window and fluttering a white handkerchief in token that we were not forgotten by our friends, the kind ministrant to our comfort who had sent us more appetizing food than the coarse prison fare, was none other than my darling whom, during that time, I had supposed to be hundreds of miles away.

"Jacquette!" I cried again.

At this moment she caught sight of the shackle upon my ankle and the heavy iron ball attached to it.

"*Mon Dieu*, Monsieur Adair, so they have chained you like a hound," she faltered, while her eyes grew dim and overflowed.

"Spare your tears, sweetheart, this is one of the least of my troubles," I said. In another moment I had clasped her in my arms and was madly kissing her brow, her pale face, and then, oh bliss, her sweet lips, as I pressed her closer to my heart. "Forgive me, dearest one," I pleaded, releasing her at last. "I had not dared to hope you would find a way to gain admittance here. Your coming is like a visit of an angel from heaven."

As I gazed upon her, and then again embraced her, I forgot I had thought she loved Ramon; that a few days before I had concluded she was betrothed to Captain Weston. I remembered only that I loved her and she was come to comfort me, by her dear sympathy, to strengthen me for the final tragedy. But now the recollection of these surmises checked my ardor, though I still held her hot hands firm in mine.

"Ah, Jacquette, pardon my insanity," I said, "I should not have forgotten that you belong to another."

"Another?" she murmured, while her cheeks flushed to a burning crimson.

"Yes, I have heard you are the promised wife of Captain Weston."

"Nonsense. It is not true," she answered, looking up at me shyly.

"But it was Ramon you loved," I persisted, crushing her little hands so hard that an involuntary cry of pain escaped her.

"Nial, do you love me?" asked Jacquette, with a glance that searched my heart of hearts.

"God knows, *chérie*, I love you with all my strength and power of loving."

"As you love me even so I love you," she whispered sweetly, and hid her face upon my breast.

The next few moments I will pass over in silence. Who can adequately describe the happiness of two hearts that were made for each other, when they have come to know the truth at last?

When we could talk quietly again, I placed my one chair for Jacquette and seated myself beside her on a corner of my rickety table, a position from which I could still look down into her beautiful eyes. At the window the maid, with commendable discretion, was absorbed in watching a sentry in the yard, perhaps passing the time, after the manner of maids both of humble and high degree, in smiling with tantalizing coyness upon him, for she was young and good-looking.

"But, Jacquette," I asked in the undertone in which our conversation had been carried on from the beginning, "how is it that, often as you signalled to us from the street, you did not once raise your veil and give me the joy of recognizing you, of knowing it was you who brought us aid?"

Again my dear blushed rosy red.

"Indeed, Nial, once or twice I did raise it," she acknowledged hesitatingly, "and you made no sign in response. The window was so high it was impossible to obtain a glimpse of the prisoners from below. Had it been a cell on this tier and facing the street, of course I could have seen you plainly, and you me."

"None of the lower cells are lighted from the street," I replied absently, and then continued, "it was hard luck certainly, dearest, that I missed the sight of your sweet face, which is now to me in my prison as a vision of paradise, and even Ramon happened not to be at the window when you raised your veil. Had he seen you he would have told me; if not, I would have read the secret in his own gladness."

"I thought you knew," returned my darling in maidenly confusion, "and when you made no sign I comforted myself with the reflection that even if you did not care who came, I could serve the cause as well. I resolved that every suffering patriot should be the same to me. So I tried to deceive my heart, but — but — you had not told me then of your love, Nial."

Once more I caught her to my breast.

"Dearest, I have loved you from the first moment I saw you, I shall love you forever and ever," I cried, kissing her passionately. "And now, since I know you love me, I shall die happy."

"Oh, do not speak of dying," she protested with a shudder.

"Jacquette, listen to me," I went on resolutely. "I am condemned to die for the cause we both love, and as you see" — I glanced bitterly now at my

fetters—"there is small hope of escape. If the Tories who have accomplished my ruin think to have the satisfaction of seeing me hanged, however, they shall be disappointed yet."

"You have a plan? What do you propose to do?" whispered Jacquette, pressing closer to me.

"Only this," I returned grimly. "I know the guard around the scaffold will be composed of my countrymen. Taking advantage of the customary permission I will address them. After I have finished I will leap from the scaffold down among them, crying that they may run me through with their bayonets if they will, but they shall never strangle me like a dog. If they do it, at least I shall die fighting still. But on that day my chains will have been stricken off, some one in the throng may perhaps cut the bonds that bind my arms, and, it may be, in the *mêlée* I shall regain my liberty."

It was the design of a desperate man.

"If the worst comes, perhaps your plot may serve," said Jacquette; "but though the days are going so fast you are not yet in such a hopeless strait as you suppose, Nial. Many men, and women too, are working in your behalf. They have sent a petition to the governor and hope to obtain a respite for you. *Allons!* I did not mean to tell you, for fear of the reaction upon you if we should fail. But we cannot, we must not fail! No, Nial, you shall be saved."

I kissed her once more.

"And who have so interested themselves for a doomed man?" I inquired with a thrill of gratitude.

"Your friends throughout Canada and the United States. Captain Weston has been most kind in presenting one petition, and I—I have done what I could."

"My darling, I know you have done more than all the others together," I declared fervidly.

Before we could say more, the turnkey was again in the corridor. "The time is up, madam," he called. "You must leave at once."

The key grated in the lock, and he threw open the door. The maid, seeing it ajar, ran out immediately, glad to be again at liberty.

"This is not the last time," Jacquette whispered to me.

I raised her hands to my lips, but drawing them away hastily she threw her arms around my neck and clung to me piteously for a moment. As I tried to soothe her she took my face between her dear hands and kissed me on the mouth. Then releasing herself from my arms, she dried her eyes and dropped her veil over her face.

"It is au revoir, not adieu," she said under her breath, and, with a forced composure, passed into the corridor. With a sigh she heard the door locked between us, and went a few steps, but at the turn of the passage she stopped and waved her hand, with a little attempt at gayety meant to encourage me.

It did indeed; for it brought back to my mind a scene of long, long ago, the picture of the husking festival at St. Charles, and of a girl who stood on the balcony of a farmhouse and smiled at me, while at the same time, in sportive coquetry she flung down a bit of blue ribbon as a gage to my companion. And all that night, as I tossed upon my miserable prison pallet, I dreamed of Dr. Nelson's manor at St. Denis, of my friend Ramon, and of Jacquette whose love had changed captivity to heaven for me. Was it the tragic position in which I stood

that had centred the dear girl's affections upon me instead of upon Ramon? During this precious interview I had put the question to her squarely, only to see her smile it away. So still it is unanswered. But this is what she said, with tenderly shining eyes,—

"You want me to tell you how I came to love you, Nial? I loved you, *beau chevalier*, as a young girl loves, perhaps for your dashing air, your broad shoulders, and the way you have of tossing back your brown hair. Oh, the vanity of men; I see you like the picture. I loved you for your bravery at St. Denis, your loyalty to your friends, especially to Ramon. Above all, I love you now for your indomitable courage when confronted with an ignoble death. All I know is, you are my hero, and I love you."

From this moment my mood changed. I found I was now less resigned to die, having so much more for which to live. Jacquette had promised help, but might she not be too sanguine?

Had my friends the power to assist me? Would my adopted country intervene in time to rescue me?

But three days now remained before the date appointed for my execution. In my suspense it seemed to me I suffered the torments of the damned, or at least the agonies of the pale shapes that wander through the dim land of Dante's *purgatorio*. It was not, however, the agony of fear but of hope. I was not afraid to die, but I wished, oh, so much, to live.

In the afternoon, as I sat at my table, writing to Jacquette the words of undying affection that now fell so easily from my pen, a sudden noise arose from the street beyond the prison. It was the roll of drums, the call to arms. Anon, too, all the

church bells of the city began to ring, and there were sounds as of crowds of men hurrying hither and thither.

What could be the cause of all this commotion and alarm? Was there any truth in the rumor that the patriots would make an attempt to land and rescue their comrades in the prison, and particularly myself?

Reports of intended invasions of this kind had been current during the entire winter, and the soldiery had been called out many times. Some one on the lookout, descriing an object on the lake which might prove to be an armed vessel, would give the alarm; the tocsin would be sounded, the bells rung, the soldiers would hasten to their posts, and the din created might have awakened the Seven Sleepers. And all for nothing.

As I listened to it now, therefore, I recalled a night some seven weeks earlier, when the ice began to break up. On that occasion, as the mysterious ship still glided on into the bay and those on board refused to answer to the challenge, a smart fire was begun from the shore and apparently gallantly sustained by the oncoming craft. When morning dawned, the stubborn and insolent foe was discovered to be a great tree that, uprooted by a storm at some point along the shore, had fallen into the lake and floated down. The branches and bushes, also swept away with it, were presumably boats in the wake of the ship, loaded down with hostile soldiers.

Now the signs were ominous. The troops of the garrison had perhaps taken more grog than usual and, when the alarm became general, they grew more boisterous than is commonly permitted among a soldiery liable to be suddenly called out. The

shouts, the wild hurrahs, succeeded the discharge of the cannon. Just as I began to believe the town was really threatened Tummas, the turnkey, came running up the corridor and paused at my cell in great agitation and excitement.

"Out with it, man," I demanded. "What is the meaning of this pandemonium?"

"Oh, sir," he cried, "a steamboat, floating the American flag is coming up the bay. At first it was thought she meant to fire upon the city, but her signals show she has come on a friendly errand, and so the shots from our cannon have turned into a salute."

The next day, the second ere that appointed to be my last, Jacquette came again escorted by Captain Weston, who had obtained for her the privilege. Blessings on my darling, it was her voice that gave me glad news now, as before it had given me hope.

"Nial, Nial," she cried, "the governor has granted you a respite because of a petition brought by the steamboat from the United States and to please your countrymen in Canada. For he says, the young Queen of England is grateful to them, believing the Irish saved the province during the uprisings. And so they did. Had they been with us, we would have gained our cause. But oh, Nial, Nial, you will soon be free."

And with this cry she fainted in my arms.

CHAPTER SIXTEENTH

STRANGE JOURNEYINGS

THE reprieve by no means meant that I was to be set at liberty, however, as I was soon to discover. Unfortunately for my fellow-prisoners and myself, the burning of the Canadian steamer "Robert Peel" at Well's Island by a band of patriots disguised as Indians caused us to be treated more rigorously than before.

Thus it was that, twenty-four hours after Jacquette brought me the glad news that I was yet to live, I was awakened in the middle of the night by the flash of a lantern in the corridor. As I sat up on my pallet, half blinded by the sudden light, I heard the rattling of keys and the grating of the lock. The next moment the flickering rays of the lantern sent weird shadows, like the ghosts of former occupants of my cell, shuddering along the walls, and Tummas entered.

"You hare to rise hat once, sir," he said, "hand prepare to be taken haway."

Had I been deceived? Was the respite but a sham, after all? Was it intended I should be secretly put to death, now in the darkness of the night when the city slept and my friends, happy in having as they thought, paved the way for my speedy release, were resting tranquilly, unconscious of the fate that menaced me?

The first part of the gaoler's injunction was unnecessary, for I was already on my feet. Tummas had not waited to say more, but went down the passage, leaving his lantern outside my door. As I dressed, I commended my soul to God, thinking that, perhaps, within the next half hour I might be before the bar of His judgment.

My natural supposition that I was to be speedily hustled out of this world was, nevertheless, presently changed, as I heard the turnkey arousing others in the same row of cells. It could not be possible that all the patriots in the gaol were to be led forth to execution thus, the others without even the form of a trial.

Yet, if we were merely to be transferred to another prison, why this secrecy and haste? Why could not the journey be put off until the morning? I put the question to Tummas when he returned.

"Lud, sir, hi don't know, but hi suppose hit his thought safer to send you hin this way," was the only answer he vouchsafed me.

Brought out into the large room I found myself once more among my former companions. Chained together in pairs, we were before long led out of the building, and presently found ourselves marching down to the wharf. A steamboat lay waiting and, by the flare of the torches, we saw a gray line of smoke escaping from her funnel and knew she was ready to start. Our escort down to the boat had been a company of negroes, her majesty's black guards, and we presently found we were to have them during the voyage. The regulars could not be well spared from the garrison, and we were thought too popular with the volunteers, who might be tempted to desert across the lines to the States,

taking us with them. The blacks being originally slaves who had run away from the south would be sure to keep clear of the border, lest they should be caught and sent back to their masters.

There were twenty of us, literally and figuratively, in the same boat, and huddled together aft, with a barricade of barrels of flour in front of us and the sentinels behind. As the steamer put off, the white officer in charge of the party informed us that we were to be placed in care of the military at Fort Henry, at the end of the lake. He then went into the cabin and made himself comfortable.

Though it was now early in June, at this season in the north the temperature is cool at night, but we had no shelter, beds, nor blankets. Still chained together two and two, some of my companions seated themselves upon the deck or perched upon the barrels; others leaned against the gun-wales. Among these, but a little apart from the rest, with my involuntary mate, I stood peering through the gloom at the sky and the tossing waters. Alas, every moment carried me farther away from all chance of rescue, from the friends whom my misfortunes had made for me in Toronto, and, worst of all, to my thinking, far from my beloved Jacquette, whom I was leaving without a spoken word of farewell.

The most I had been able to do was to write a few words, which I intrusted to Tummas, telling him to take the letter to her and he would surely be well rewarded. Of course in addition I gave him as generous a present as I could. Thanks to the success of an acquaintance in smuggling into the prison a small sum of money sent to me from the States, I had a little coin at my disposal.

Would Tummas deliver the letter? How it would grieve my darling! Yet if it failed to reach her, how shocked she would be when the news got abroad in the town that, with the other prisoners, I had been hurried away thus without warning.

"My poor Jacquette, am I destined ever to see you again?" I mentally soliloquized. "I must no longer dream of a time when I may call you by the sweet name of wife. If I ever regain my freedom, doubtless it will be as a gray-haired man, coming out of prison to find I have been long forgotten by the world."

I dared dwell no longer upon these sombre thoughts. "Shall we mingle with the men?" I proposed to Culver, my companion. "Being shackled together, wherever we move we must go in company."

Among the others I had noticed and saluted Sutherland. Several times I had sent him messages of cheer in the gaol, and occasionally little presents of the dainties sent in to me, at rare intervals, by several kind ladies who on gala days remembered our loneliness. But this was the first time I had seen him since the day when, in his picturesque uniform, he had posed as a general at Bois Blanc. We now drew near him, and I conversed with him a while but, finding him no cheerful company, returned to my own thoughts.

About three o'clock in the morning, our guards growing tired of watching us, and sure we could not get away, piled their muskets and cartridge boxes on the other side of the cabin and went forward to amuse themselves, leaving only one sentinel at his post. This was our chance.

"I'll wager the officer is asleep," I whispered to

Culver. "If we rush upon the sentinel we can bear him down, seize the arms, take possession of the boat, and run her across to the American shore of the lake."

"Chained though we are, I believe we can do it," he replied, for he was mettlesome and resourceful.

"When you give the signal, major, I will act."

Cautiously, we communicated our plan to the others. They were, to a man, in favor of it, with the exception of Sutherland.

"I flatly refuse," he declared.

"Then remain quiet and keep yourself out of danger," I exhorted him. "We will ask no more of you."

"It is folly! we shall all be shot down. It is better to await the chance of release. If you do not at once abandon your design I shall warn the sentinel," he said sullenly.

Time was wasted in arguing with him. Toward daybreak, as the boat came within sight of Fort Henry and the town of Kingston, the guards returning took up their arms, the officer came on deck to inspect us, and the opportunity to make a bold dash for liberty was lost.

One thought had served in some degree to buoy up my sinking spirits during the voyage. "Perhaps it was to this place my dear comrade was sent," I said to myself. "Possibly here, far from the friends who are free and happy, he and I, by a fortunate chance, or still better, a kind dispensation of Providence, may be reunited."

Soon after our party landed, I found the hope was vain.

"There are no other political prisoners here," said the officer in charge of us, when I put the question

to him. "But only the Canadians among your company are to remain at Fort Henry. You, and the nine other Americans, are to be sent on to Quebec."

It was not cheering news that I was to be still farther separated from Jacquette and every one whom I knew.

During the evening the soldiers of the garrison showed themselves eager to pay us any little attention in their power, and the supper furnished us was the best that had been provided since our imprisonment.

Early the next morning, after we had breakfasted on prison fare, we Americans were called out and our chains were stricken off, a consideration for which we were truly grateful. Having taken an affecting leave of the patriots destined to remain here, and whom we might never see again, we were placed once more under our black escort and marched to the boat waiting to take us down the Rideau Canal to Lower Canada.

During this new voyage we had the freedom of the boat and remained most of the time on deck, charmed with the romantic scenery of the country. Our guards were ever on the alert, however, and when occasionally the boat put into the shore for wood, or stopped at some little village, we were requested to go below. Evidently, it was still feared the people might attempt to rescue us.

At last we reached a town on the boundary of the two provinces, at the point where the canal joins the lake. Here the lumber sent over the waterway on rafts is divided into small cages, to be passed through the locks, and, once floated through, is made up again to be carried on over the swift current of the Ottawa. The notables of the place came on

board, curious to see us. At first I kept to the cabin, but a strapping young captain of a logging gang sought me out.

"Lord Durham, the new governor-general, has already arrived at Quebec," he told me. "Whether that may be for your advantage or not, it is impossible to say, sir, but at least in the Canadas you have many friends like these."

As he spoke he pointed to the wharf where a throng of his men and others stood watching us with axes and logging-poles in their hands, excellent weapons indeed for an emergency. So our ship's captain clearly thought, for he ordered all visitors ashore and steamed out into the river. As we floated down the current, we were followed by a chorus of cheers from the lusty throats of the lumbermen.

The next day we landed and were marched across the country toward the St. Lawrence. That night at a blockhouse we messed and slept with our officer. The guards being encamped at a short distance we were, in a manner, on our parole. The following morning we continued our march to Carillon, where we embarked again upon a steamboat. Soon after noon we came to Montreal. At the prison we were served with a fine dinner provided by the French prisoners still incarcerated there. After a night's rest, we were again marched through the streets to the Quebec steamer, crowds of the people, many of them friendly, turning out to see us.

It was afternoon when we approached Quebec. The boats riding at anchor in the harbor, the landing-place, and the streets through which we marched were thronged with the hostile portion of the population, who cried out insultingly to us as we passed. There were no French Canadians among these

crowds. The narrowness of the thoroughfares, their steep ascent, and the heat of the day made the trudge up La Montagne and the length of St. Louis Street seem interminable, even though at its end we knew we should find again a prison.

"Ah, with what different feelings we would have approached this citadel had our fortune been to attempt its capture," said Culver, aside, to me.

"Yes, even though those frowning batteries belched fire, and we should fall in a mad effort to scale the wall like the American general, my brave countryman," I answered.

While we spoke we entered the gate of the fortress and were halted, perhaps that we might take breath. The sentinels saluted our officer. Several soldiers off duty, who were standing about the door of the barracks to the right of the gate, stared at our black guards with astonishment, and I caught the eyes of more than one among them fixed upon us with a certain interest.

Feeling sure my companions, like myself, must be suffering from thirst after our climb up the hill, I asked that we might be given water to drink. Without waiting to be sent by the officer in charge of our escort, one of these soldiers started off and straightway returned with a bucketful of cool water and a tin cup. For each of us in turn he poured a draught that was most refreshing.

"Forward," came the order, crisp and sharp. Across the parade, purposely left uneven and stony, that the regiments who drilled here might become used to the rough surface of the country hereabouts, we were conducted by a corporal's guard toward an angle in the fortifications, shut off from the parade by a high board fence. At a gate in the fence stood

a sentinel. Passing him, we entered the enclosure, and found ourselves before a bomb-proof building whose door was studded with iron nails.

Another sentry paced up and down before it. A sergeant inserted a great key in the lock, turned it, and threw open the door. Entering we glanced about us with dull indifference, conscious that we should know our surroundings only too well as time went on.

We were in a room about fifty feet long and twelve broad, with a high arched roof from which the moisture dripped. There were two strongly-barred windows, and the walls, which were very thick, had loopholes for musketry. The donjon had evidently been used as a military prison. The settles were of iron, and boards placed across two of them formed a table. The bedsteads were of iron too, but now they were folded up against the wall. We afterwards discovered that to each was allowed a thin pallet and a soldier's blanket. There was a stove in the place, also, and on the floor near it lay a pile of brushwood.

Warm as the air had been outside, here it was chill and damp, and the thought crossed my mind that had I been the man whom I descried at the farther end of the room, I would have started a fire. The chamber was ill-lighted and his back was toward us, but clearly he was a fellow-prisoner, else he would not have been locked up here. His position was an odd one, I whimsically reflected. It was hardly fitting he should bid us welcome, since we had no wish to be here, and yet the instinct of courtesy would have impelled him to extend to us a greeting.

Seated amid the shadows, at first he had seemed

to me one of them, for he did not even turn his head at the sound of the opening door. Now, however, apparently aroused to the fact that others beside the prison rounds had come in, he slowly rose to his feet and wheeled about.

He was tall, straight, and broad-shouldered, and, I remember, as he came forward, apparently in puzzled uncertainty as to what this intrusion on our part might mean, I thought it a pity so fine a figure of a man, and one plainly accustomed to much exercise in the open air, should languish in captivity.

I could not distinguish his features, though mine must have been visible to him, because, as it chanced, I stood where the light from one of the windows fell full upon me. Therefore I was at a loss to understand the sudden change in his demeanor, the quick start, the eager stride forward. Not until he was within a few feet of me did I know I had ever seen him before.

Then indeed I echoed his cry of delight and amazement, and seizing his outstretched hands wrung them rapturously; then indeed was my heart uplifted with joy. For the man who thus came to greet me in this my new prison-house was my dear friend Ramon.

CHAPTER SEVENTEENTH

THE CITADEL

WHEN we calmed down somewhat after the excitement of this unexpected meeting, Ramon told me he had only that afternoon been transferred to this large room from a small cell under the same roof, and he was cogitating what this change might mean when we were brought in.

Until late in the night he and I talked together, as at our reunion under such different circumstances near Le Détroit. Now, in our heart-to-heart conference, instead of avoiding the name of Jacquette I spoke of her frankly, telling him of her presence at my trial, her visit to me in my prison accompanied by her maid, and finally of our betrothal, a strange love troth, truly, since I was still under sentence of death.

"Ah, Nial, from my soul I congratulate you upon having won her love," he cried, when I had finished my story. "Jacquette is a pearl among women. For her sake now, as well as for your own, we must make every effort to obtain your release."

"My dear comrade," said I, "not even for Jacquette shall I ever go forth from this place without you, unless it be to mount the scaffold."

He looked pleased at my thus putting my friendship for him apparently before even my love for my darling.

"Then I, too, must make haste to regain my liberty," he declared lightly, "in order that I may dance at your wedding. Truly, I must begin to practise a *pas seul* to-morrow."

From that time he was so gay it was with difficulty he kept to the subdued tone of voice in which we conversed to avoid waking our companions or calling forth a warning from the sentinel outside one of the windows. Once or twice a suspicion flashed across my mind that his brave spirits were, in part, assumed as if he strove to divert my thoughts and cause me to forget how long it might be before I could claim Jacquette as my bride.

"But, one thing is evident," I said to myself, "he is glad of my happiness in the promise she has given me. How fortunate there was no real rivalry between him and me. Had we both loved Jacquette, what would have become of our friendship?"

Had she really given her love to my comrade instead of to me, could I have conquered my jealousy and wished him joy of his good fortune? I said in my thoughts that I would have tried to do this in all sincerity; but what man knows himself? If Ramon had hoped to win her, could he now listen to me so patiently while I talked of her with a lover's pride and eloquence?

"Pshaw, this is a vain question to raise, even in my reflections," I told myself. "Ramon is brave and generous, but, — well, a lover is a lover — and because I love him so well, I am heartily glad he does not love Jacquette."

Days lengthened into weeks and we seemed domiciled in our new prison for an indefinite period.

There were at this time in Quebec two battalions of the queen's household troops who had just arrived

from England. Of these the Coldstream Guards were quartered in the citadel, the Grenadiers at the barracks, the old Jesuit College in the city. Several of the officers of these regiments called upon us with punctilious courtesy, regarding us as prisoners of war. We had also a visit from the commandant of the fort, Sir James MacDonald, a handsome, soldierly man of middle age.

"Gentlemen, I intend to treat you well, but in pursuance of my duty I shall, be assured, take every means to prevent you from making any attempt at escape," he said with decision.

In response to his grim humor, I smiled as I looked around the walls and at the door doubly guarded, and knew full well we were within the inner fortress.

"Escape!" I echoed; "since to get out of this place would appear to be impossible, we are not like to be so foolhardy as to court certain death by essaying to get away."

By this time we had discovered there was a sentinel outside as well as within our enclosure, while on the earth-covered roof of our quarters, which formed part of the earthworks of the fortress, another sentry paced to and fro. On the other side of the building was the inner ditch of the fortifications.

The order of our day was as follows. In the morning the sergeant who had charge of us entered the room with four soldiers who made up the beds, folded the bedsteads, swept the floor, and brought in fresh water and wood. Breakfast and supper we prepared for ourselves, but a soldier always came and cooked our dinner. Plates, knives and forks, even tablecloths were furnished to us; after each meal our sergeant carried away the knives.

At eleven o'clock each forenoon we were visited by the officer of the guard, who relieved the officer of the previous day; our names were called and we were formally delivered over to him. The same routine was followed when one sergeant relieved another in the direct charge of us. At twelve o'clock our dinner was brought in. We had our choice of ham, pork, or beef, a pound a day being allowed to each man, and we might order it cooked in whatever manner we chose.

At three o'clock the field officer of the day always came to inquire if we had any complaints to make, that he might lay them before the commandant. At four we walked out, three at a time, accompanied by a guard of six men, our sergeant, and the corporal who commanded the escort. Sutherland ordinarily took two of our men with him; Ramon and I in turn also took two. Usually it was six o'clock before the last squad returned. The evening papers of the city were then brought in, and after having been duly inspected by the sergeant, were given to us.

The sentinels were changed every two hours. Those who mounted guard over us at eleven o'clock every day had loaded muskets. When they were released and the corporal gave the word "Port Arms," the guard exchanged muskets, those who remained keeping the weapons that were loaded. At nine o'clock in the evening the tattoo was beaten and the gun fired, after which time the soldiers were required to keep in the barracks. Our lights were ordered out at this hour.

Between ten and eleven o'clock the officer of the day came round with a guard to visit the posts, and he usually looked in upon us. When the Cold-

streams were on duty they seldom came farther than the outer door of the enclosure, where they were challenged by the sentinel inside. How often I have listened to the call.

"Who goes there?"

"Rounds."

"What rounds?"

"Prison rounds."

"Advance prison rounds and give the countersign."

If the door was opened they advanced. When it was not they whispered the countersign through the door. Thereupon the sentinel would clap his firelock on the breach and shout, "Pass prison rounds; all's well."

The Grenadiers, on the contrary, invariably opened the door and came up to the sentinel at the entrance to the building. When we heard them coming, either Ramon or I would crouch down and steal along the wall to a position under one of the windows. By listening intently we could almost always hear the password as it was whispered outside. It was often an odd number and generally in the teens.

We never let pass an opportunity of trying to catch it, for, notwithstanding my reply to the commandant that escape would be impossible, our thoughts by day and our dreams at night were haunted by plans toward this end. The stronger the walls of the fortress, the more rigorous the discipline maintained therein, the more ingeniously will the captive set his wits to devise a means to regain his freedom.

We soon had reason to suspect that Sergeant Chubbes, who had charge of us during the day, had a weakness upon which we could trade; namely, his

love for money. By allowing him to buy tobacco and other small articles for us, thus enabling him to make a commission, and by giving him the wherewith to drink our health at the canteen, we soon had him in our power.

Nancy, his wife, attended to our marketing. Through her I was able to communicate with several gentlemen of the city whom we knew to be friendly to the patriot cause. In reply they sent us a purse. Nancy was not aware, however, that once, in a loaf of cake, and again in a wonderful pasty, she brought us letters from these gentlemen. Trusty friends, they said, would be on the watch to take advantage of any opportunity to help us, if we should have a chance to take "French leave" of our present lodgings and make our way across the border to the United States.

While we were breakfasting one morning shortly after this, we were surprised by a visit from the adjutant accompanied by a guard.

"Sir, I demand the key of your trunk," he said, confronting me peremptorily.

"Sir, you shall not have it until you tell me the meaning of your request," I answered with equal terseness.

For some minutes we argued the matter, for I wished to gain time to reflect upon the possible reason for this investigation. Had the sergeant betrayed the fact that we had received a present from half a dozen of the citizens? Did he suspect they had written to us? The letters I had at once destroyed, but was there anything among my scant belongings which would incriminate myself or any one else?

"If you do not give up the key immediately, I

shall have the trunk broken open," declared the officer, losing patience. "We have full knowledge of your schemes, gentlemen."

As he spoke he held up before my eyes a piece of an old broken saw. At sight of it, I laughed, and at once gave up the key.

By his order the sergeant-major not only searched through the trunk, but examined the lining, the pockets of my clothes, and every corner where anything could possibly be concealed. In the same manner he went through the effects of Sutherland, Ramon, the clothes of our fellow-prisoners, and the whole room. When all was over the adjutant, seeing me scrutinizing the saw with interest, cried testily,—

"Well, Mr. Adair, you have evidently seen this tool before. Will you be so good as to tell me where?"

"Certainly," I replied. "For some time it lay on the sill of one of the windows here, and the other day I threw it out as useless. The sentinel picked it up, and no doubt took it to the guardhouse. I am sorry the circumstance occasioned such a commotion."

The officer swore under his breath.

"Gad, sir, I beg your pardon," he broke out frankly after a moment. "The sergeant took it to the armorer, who said it was such a saw as is used to cut iron, and the report came to me that you political prisoners had tools with which you were trying to cut your way out of the fortress."

He ordered the guard away forthwith, and departed with them. Afterwards we learned that carpenters who were making repairs in the building had probably left the piece of the saw there, long before our coming. Also that the adjutant was much twitted

by his brother-officers for his mistaken zeal, and the opinion he had formed of our prowess that in face of so strong a guard, with only a rusty bit of saw for a weapon, we might charge through two battalions of her majesty's troops and make our way to the States. I mention the incident because it had much to do with what happened later.

To make amends for the annoyance he had caused us, the adjutant permitted us to go out on the ramparts earlier and to remain longer than usual. Ramon and I were never permitted to go together. On this day I was of the band that went out last.

As from the highest point of the citadel I gazed around me, I thought I had never beheld a lovelier scene than the panorama that unrolled from beneath my feet. From the west the sun shot golden arrows among the sombre woods, against the spires of the Charlesbourg church, and into the Indian village of Lorette, and made the stream of the St. Charles a gleaming ribbon of silver winding through the green meadows.

Beyond the little river I traced the white farm-houses of Beauport, the old settlement of Breton and Norman sailors that stretches its serpentine length along the shore of the St. Lawrence. The white mists arising from a cleft in a neighboring hill showed me that here was the Montmorency Fall. Thence, travelling across the marshes, my eyes rested at last upon the blue Laurentian range, where the rays of golden light touched, as with the blessings of a holy hand, the mountain of Ste. Anne, and brought out into relief the lofty peaks of Bonhomme and Troumonthuan.

Coming back to the foreground of the picture I

saw below me the quaint old city of Quebec, the antique gables and sloping roofs of the Lower Town; halfway up the height the towers of the basilica, the Laval University, and the long front of the Jesuit college. From here, as well as from the Recollet monastery, then sheltered beneath the cliff, went out the first missionaries to carry the message of the Cross to the Indian tribes, even as far as the Great Lakes and the Mississippi.

Yonder, too, I beheld the Ursuline convent, so linked with the story of the past, and at the edge of the cliff the ancient Château of St. Louis. Crown-ing all, on the summit of Cape Diamond, was this fortress where I was a prisoner, this citadel, founded by Champlain, above which for a hundred and fifty years had floated the white standard of the *fleur de lis* in token of the supremacy of France in the New World.

From beneath these ramparts Duluth and La Mothe Cadillac set forth to found French military posts in the great Northwest. Beyond, on the Plains of Abraham, was fought the battle wherein Wolfe and Montcalm fell, when France lost Canada and the French Canadians a country.

But from the contemplation of the beauty that, on this midsummer afternoon, lay over the town, the fields, and the sunlit mountains bounding the west, I turned eagerly toward the eastern prospect, even though it was in shadow. For in that direction, across the noble tide of the St. Lawrence, now dotted with shipping, beyond the heights of Levis, upon the distant horizon I could see the hills of the State of Maine, the hills of freedom. Would I ever reach them? Or was I destined to die thus in sight of the promised land?

On this evening, as many times afterwards, I felt, if I were fated to meet my end in Quebec, I would pray that I might be shot on the ramparts with my face turned toward the country of my adoption, which I loved even as I loved the country of my birth.

Now, as my eyes lingered in fascination upon the deep purple outline of those hills against the sky, my thoughts went back to Jacquette. I wondered if she was still in Toronto, and for the hundredth time I conjectured as to whether she had received my hastily scrawled letter. The dearest thing in life to me was her love; and yet often and often I reproached myself for having claimed her heart and won her promise to be my wife. And in the exaltation of this emotion, I told myself, I would willingly endure any trials in store for me, if I could but lift the burden of anxiety from her spirit and know that she was happy.

CHAPTER EIGHTEENTH

LOVE AND A TRAITOR

IT has been said that friends and lovers when separated can sometimes actually communicate by thinking intently of each other. Perhaps it was some such sympathy of mind acting upon mind, or, more truly of soul crying out to soul, that made Jacquette so, almost constantly, present to my thoughts on the particular evening of which I have just spoken.

The next day Nancy, the sergeant's wife, returning from her marketing in the town, sought to entertain me with her woman's gossip, to which I paid little heed.

"Well, well, sir, I see you are not listening," she said at last, "but I have one more story of the forenoon, which perhaps will interest you. As I stood awaiting my turn at one of the market stalls a lady, who was waiting too, happened to speak to me. As I chatted with her I chanced to say I was executing some small commissions for Major Adair, one of the Yankee prisoners at the citadel."

"Poor man, I have heard of him," she exclaimed. "'How lonely he must be, shut up in the fortress here, in a strange country, far from his home—and I suppose he is in his prime too, and has a wife in the States?'"

"Indeed, he is scarcely turned five-and-twenty and has no wife," said I.

"Is he good-looking?" she asked.

"As fine a figure of a man as you would wish to see," says I. "At this, she hesitated a bit, sir, and then said in the kindness of her heart, —

"'Although I am a stranger I should like to contribute a little to his comfort. Now here is a loaf of white bread. I was taking two to a friend of mine to prove my skill in cookery, but one will serve as well. I will slip the other into your basket for the poor young man; only you must never tell him where it came from, will you?' Of course I promised, but la, sir, the story is too amusing to keep. All a body has to do is to tell a girl a man is well-favored and directly she is interested in him."

"Ah, Nancy, why did you so deceive your kind little countrywoman?" said I, lightly.

Nancy tossed her head.

"Gentlemen get no fine speeches from me," she cried. "As for the bread, I could make better myself."

Unpacking the basket while she spoke, Nancy laid the loaf, with the other provisions she had brought, upon my table. I believed she had chattered on in the hope of being told to keep the odd sixpence of the silver she had brought back in change. When, this matter being settled to her satisfaction, she disappeared, I proceeded to examine her purchases.

As my eyes fell upon the little gift the stranger had sought to bestow upon me without my knowledge, I realized that Nancy's tale was something more than the creation of a vivid fancy and a garrulous tongue. When I unfolded the snowy cloth in which the loaf was wrapped, I scrutinized it closely, but could find no initial or marking to give a clew to the identity of the sender. The bread looked most appetizingly light and wholesome.

"We will toast the strange lady and also her loaf at supper," I said to myself, and crossed the room to put the provisions into the cupboard, for I was commissary-general of our mess. As I did so there flashed upon me the remembrance of the cake and the pasty that had contained something better than plums for us; namely, bits of writing from the friends outside in the city, who had been raised up to us, as it were, in our need. What if this present, apparently a chance offering from a stranger, should be a ruse to convey to us some important information!

Following this thought I broke the loaf in halves. Ah, yes, I was right. In the middle of it was a small folded paper. Plucking out the note, I secreted it in the breast of my coat, and saying nothing to my companions of the discovery, turned idly to the window.

It was fully half an hour before I ventured to read the paper though all that time it seemed like a coal of fire against my heart, so anxious was I to know the news it must contain. At last I managed to withdraw it without attracting any attention.

My first glance at the contents nearly betrayed me into an audible exclamation of astonishment. "*Ciel!*" I ejaculated under my breath. The writing was Jacquette's. My dear love was in Quebec. It was she who had spoken to the sergeant's wife; it was she who had played the little comedy of the white loaf and made the unsuspecting Nancy her messenger.

Since the breaking up of her home on the Riche-lieu, the brave girl had visited among her relatives and friends. She had thus found it possible to come to Toronto, hoping to help me as she did. The

same generosity and self-forgetfulness had now, I felt sure, brought her to Quebec.

There was, indeed, small chance that she could assist me except by her sweet sympathy. I did not wish to think I had grown so weak as to lean on a woman's strength. Yet the very knowledge that she was in the city, and the bit of sky above my prison also looked down upon the house that sheltered her, wonderfully cheered and brightened me.

After a few moments of intense emotion, during which I held her letter tight clasped in my hand, I stole another glance at it, and continued thus to get it, bit by bit, until the whole was gleaned. It was quite short, and this is what it said:

NIAL, MY DEAREST, — I am here and may sometimes succeed in sending you a message. Watch well for it. You will wish to know the news of my uncle Wolfred, or I should be loth to tell you. Dr. Nelson, Mon. Papineau, and the French Canadian gentlemen whom you met in the prison at Montreal have been transported to Bermuda by order of the new governor-general, Lord Durham. At parting the doctor bade me tell you he has written to several of his friends, whom he hopes may be able to serve you, and that he prays daily for your release. Keep a brave heart still, my Nial, and trust to

Your loving

JACQUETTE.

As I finished scanning the sweet and simple words I raised the little letter to my lips and kissed it with passionate fervor.

"Ah, my darling, how well I read between the lines the things you would not tell me," I mentally soliloquized. "How well I understand that, but for me, you would have gone with your uncle to assist in

cheering his loneliness in the far-away land of the tropics. But you sacrificed the love of one who has been to you a father, and he has relinquished the devotion of a daughter for my sake. Surely with the friendship of such a man and the love of such a woman, a fellow would be craven indeed not to present a bold front to adversity."

That evening at supper I entertained my companions by the gayety of my spirits, and we passed an hour or two in telling stories and singing lively or martial songs.

The next day we were visited by the new governor's secretary, who told us I was to be sent to England and thence transported to New South Wales, and Sutherland would be set at liberty if he could furnish bail. Thereafter, the doughty general spent his time in vainly writing to almost everybody he knew. Nobody wanted to be his security. This of course made him doubly morose and irritable, and one evening he said to the adjutant who came to our quarters with several brother-officers, —

"Sir, may I speak with you alone?"

"No, sir," was the curt reply. "Speak out! What do you wish to say?"

"These men are opposed to me," whined the traitor, turning upon us. "They are communicating with people outside. I have seen Adair writing on the leaves of the books borrowed from the town library, and he receives messages in the same way."

At this the sergeant who stood by interrupted him angrily.

"Have a care what you say, man."

Then addressing the adjutant, Chubbes added emphatically, "I examine every book that comes in

and goes out, sir. Besides, the prisoners are not permitted to have writing materials."

"That counts for nothing," sneered Sutherland, forgetting his usual cunning. "The sergeant is bribed by Adair and the others."

"Bribed, sir! A sergeant of the Coldstream guards who has seen eighteen years of service, bribed!" exclaimed the adjutant, incensed. "Impossible!"

We saw at once that the *esprit du corps* of all the officers present was hurt by the imputation against one of the men whom they regarded as most trustworthy. Realizing that he had made a grave mistake, Sutherland averted his face and muttered some trivial complaint.

"You must be insane, man," answered the adjutant with impatience, and the party went off.

When they were gone the miserable fellow, in his rage, attacked Culver with a knife. The sergeant called the guard, who reported the matter. The following morning Sutherland was taken from our room and locked into one of the black holes which adjoin the guardhouse. Thenceforth we made a point of sending him all the small comforts we could, partly because we really pitied him on account of the shattered condition of his nerves, also for the reason that we wished the officers to suppose we, too, regarded him as demented.

At the time he was separated from us the appearance of his tall, lank form certainly partook of the grotesque. His dark print blouse, which he had made himself, was supposed to be of the pattern of a Kentucky hunting-shirt, and had wings, intended for epaulettes, on the shoulders. His hair was long and unkempt; under the black locks which fell upon his forehead a pair of dull eyes looked out from a

lean and sallow visage, while his bristling moustache gave him a wild air which he considered soldierly and fierce. Luckily for us, we had never confided to him our hope of getting away.

As I have already said, the rear wall of our prison was built along the side of the moat of the fort. To make an opening in this wall sufficiently large to permit of our getting out would not be difficult, and we began the work.

We soon found, however, that guards were stationed along the moat, as they were in front of the building. Concluding that we could not pass them, we set about filling up again the space we had made in the wall. This we were able to do so well that when the task was finished we ourselves could hardly detect the spot where it had been. The wall, from dampness, was of a dingy yellow color, which we imitated in a plaster composed of flour mixed with water in which a small quantity of tobacco had been soaked. Thus we obtained the exact tint of the original mortar, and very proud we were of our piece of masonry.

The plan I now proposed was more hazardous, but to its ingenuity I trusted for success. Ramon and the others agreed that the scheme sounded well, but they doubted if it could be accomplished.

"If I provide the means, will you try?" I asked.

"Yes, yes," they promised with enthusiasm. What it was will be made clear, later.

Jacquette had been able to send me a bottle of sympathetic ink by pretending it was a bottle of cough mixture. Nancy had told her Major Adair suffered from the dampness of the prison and was, she feared, going into a consumption. The sergeant's wife supposed the pretty girl she had met

at the market was, by means of the interchange of reading matter and small attentions, carrying on a harmless flirtation with a young man whose loneliness she pitied.

On the margin of two or three pages of one of these books I now wrote a note to my darling with the hope that, observing the turned-down leaves, she would hold them to the fire, and thus the writing would become visible. Without telling her the details of my project, I asked her to send me several steel files, if possible. I also reminded her of the time she wished to send Ramon and me away from the Richelieu, and how she had provisioned and left a canoe in readiness for us. I confessed to her that I still treasured the little glove I found in the canoe on the evening when my comrade and I groped our way to the mouth of the cave.

"At that time, dearest love," I wrote, "I would not go, because never in my life have I run away from a fight. Now, truly, I am like to run into one. Nevertheless, if you will arrange to have a rowboat armed, supplied, and waiting at a certain place upon a certain night, when I shall send you word, you will perform an act of humanity. And upon a happy day in the near future, you and I, beloved, will meet, please God, to part no more."

The book I sent back by Nancy. No response came to my missive, however. Fearing that, by some mischance, Jacquette had not discovered it, I wrote another on a scrap of wrapping paper and carried it about with me, hoping for an opportunity to send it to her by some other means.

During our evening walk upon the ramparts we often noticed strangers who, either from a wish to see the interior of fortifications so famous, or a

desire to view the surrounding panorama from so lofty a position, had obtained a pass to enter the works. Perhaps, too, they were interested to see prisoners who had obtained an unpleasant notoriety. From the appearance of these men we could easily judge whether they commiserated our fate or were rancorously hostile to us.

One afternoon, shortly before sunset, when we had come out as usual, I noticed a young man leaning against one of the walls inside the grounds allowed and reserved for us. His face was turned from me, but in figure he seemed scarcely more than a youth. At first I supposed he was one of the young officers of the garrison who, when off duty, were fond of loitering about in civilian's dress. No doubt the sergeant thought so also, for without noticing him Chubbes busied himself in ordering off all the stragglers who had invaded our allotted promenade, and in placing the cordon of sentinels around us. While he and the corporal were thus engaged, I sauntered toward the stranger. Into my mind had flashed the thought that he might be a friend.

"It is a fine evening, sir," I said in a subdued tone, addressing him in French.

"A perfect evening," he replied very low, in the same language.

The voice was deep, yet it seemed to me disguised, and there was a note in it that I fancied I had heard before. The young man's back was still toward me, and I could not so much as catch a glimpse of his face, yet his lithe figure and the spirited poise of his head with its short, wavy locks were strangely familiar.

"You are French, sir? Perhaps you are acquainted with my friends in the town?"

"Perhaps."

"Then in the name of the girl you love, will you take a letter from me to a lady?"

"Her name is —?"

"Mademoiselle Jacquette de Rouville."

I was now within a few feet of the stranger. As I spoke the name of my darling he wheeled around and confronted me.

"Take care, do not betray any surprise," he said.

Truly the warning came none too soon. The visitor was Jacquette herself; Jacquette who had risked detection and arrest for the chance of seeing me. How I longed to fold her in my arms, to thank her with kisses for this which she had done for me! But I dared not betray recognition even by approaching nearer to her.

To avoid suspicion, she had turned away, and leaning over the parapet, appeared absorbed in contemplating the beauty of the view.

"Ramon is here," I said.

"I know. Tell him I pray daily for him also," she answered.

I, too, bent over the wall at a distance of about a yard from her. She stretched out a hand to me, and I slipped the letter into it. What a happiness to me was the touch of her delicate fingers! Yet I clasped them only for a moment. Out of the corner of my eye I saw Chubbes coming toward us.

"Sweetheart, remain where you are until the sergeant has passed," I whispered, and went forward to meet him.

"Who is that man loitering against the wall," he asked gruffly, observing the stranger for the first time.

"I had only a passing glance at his face," I replied

truly, with a shrug of the shoulders. "But I should say it might be Lord Alexander." The latter was a young officer of the Coldstreams. "Look, sergeant," I continued, "I have been watching the new English ship at anchor in the river. She has seventy guns, did you not tell me so?"

"Seventy-four, if you please, sir," he answered glibly.

He had talked much of the frigate, and my interest in it now prevented him from suspecting anything. A few minutes later, when our party were marched back toward our prison, and during the time we stopped while the outer door of the enclosure was being opened, I saw my brave love affecting the careless swagger of a young gentleman.

At another time I should have laughed to see her, as she walked nonchalantly toward the gate, whose sentinels, I presently knew, since there was no commotion from that quarter, she must have passed in safety.

CHAPTER NINETEENTH

TROUVEUR

THOUGH Jacquette's adventure had succeeded, she was too wise to hazard a second visit within the citadel. While she became thenceforth the leading spirit outside the fort in the plot for our escape, she prudently left to others the part of coming to the ramparts for the purpose of snatching at any opportunity to communicate with us.

In my letter I had said that if she sent a messenger, he would better appear on the western rampart, and as we approached him, he should, with his left hand, take from the breast of his coat a white handkerchief and with it wipe his face twice.

The next evening two young civilians were on the promenade. They had with them a fine tawny dog on leash, and my heart gave a bound as I recognized the animal. For I was sure it was none other than Trouveur, Jacquette's favorite companion in the old days at St. Denis, the faithful watch-dog that had shown us his teeth upon our arrival at Dr. Nelson's when, as hunted fugitives, we came out of the woods. My darling in her journeys no doubt brought this dumb friend as a protector.

As it happened, the newspapers had announced that Lord Durham had met Mr. Forsyth, the American Secretary of State, by appointment in Montreal a day or two before.

"Sergeant," said I, "will you please ask those gentlemen if there is any truth in the rumor we

heard this morning that Mr. Forsyth came on to Quebec with the governor-general, and is actually in the city?"

Chubbes went over and put the question to them, but they appeared not to comprehend. They had given the signal I designated, and I therefore knew from whom they came.

"They seem to be French Canadians, and do not know English. I will speak to them myself," said I.

"Do not, sir, in Heaven's name," protested Chubbes in alarm. "It is against my orders."

"Pshaw! who will be the wiser?" I laughed. "And a bottle of porter will raise your spirits, sergeant. Stand here with me. What harm can come from my asking a simple question?"

I lifted my hat to the gentlemen. One of them returned the salutation.

"Can you tell me, sir," I said, addressing him, "if Mr. Forsyth, the American Secretary of State arrived in town with Lord Durham?"

"No, sir, I am not informed," he replied in French.

"You see he does not understand English," I declared, turning to the sergeant. "I will try him in his own language and see if he knows anything of the report."

"What news is there, sir?" I so continued.

"We were sent by friends to ascertain what you need for your plans and what we can do to help you," he rejoined readily.

"Pray introduce the name of Mr. Forsyth into the conversation as often as possible, that the sergeant may think we are conversing about him," I said warningly. "Would you aid us to escape?"

"We will help you with everything and in every possible way, Mr. Forsyth," he rejoined, pointing with his cane to the town.

We proceeded with our conversation thus, introducing the names of the American secretary and of Lord Durham at frequent intervals. The sergeant, assured that we were talking of nothing else, stood at my side all the while.

"My name is Droulet," said the young man, "and my friend here is Antoine Beaufait. He is married and lives just outside one of the town gates."

"In anticipation of your coming, messieurs," I rejoined, "I made a rough sketch of our plan, and this I will leave in the mouth of the cannon yonder, the one nearest to the wall. When we are gone you can take it out. Later also I beg you to go into the ditch behind our prison room and make a draft of the ground for us, as we cannot see it ourselves. Please find out, also, the different posts outside of the citadel where sentinels are stationed at night. When you have gained this information write it down and leave the letter in the mouth of the same cannon where you have found ours. We will get it when we come out. For any answer we may send you, look into the cannon when our guards are withdrawn. Whoever you send up must act warily, for we are closely watched. If your messenger brings that dog you have, I think I can manage to communicate with you through him."

"We shall be very prudent, Mr. Forsyth, and will do all we can do for you," vowed Monsieur Droulet. "Au revoir, monsieur."

"Well, who were the men?" asked the sergeant when they had gone.

"Rather impudent fellows," I answered laconically.

"Ha, ha! I suspected as much," declared Chubbes, proud of his astuteness. "When you talked with them in their outlandish gibberish, sir, I thought you were angry with them. But I hope they will say nothing to any of our officers about me for letting you speak to them. I would not have the adjutant know it for the best bottle of porter in the canteen and a dollar to boot."

"That is a broad hint, sergeant," said I with a laugh. "If the men come here again, take no notice of them, but I feel sure they will say nothing against you."

Our time being up we were now marched back. Later I gave Chubbes the dollar for the risk he ran.

The next afternoon I observed that Monsieur Droulet was again at his post with Trouveur, — the dog being this time at liberty. The young man had taken up his position at the extreme end of our ground, and as the afternoon was sultry, there were no visitors beside himself. He lay on the grass in the shade pretending to read a book, but I perceived that he watched me narrowly.

I strolled over to the cannon and leaned against it as I chatted with the sergeant. The other two men of my band, knowing my purpose, managed to take up the attention of the corporal and sentinel. Seizing a propitious moment, when the eyes of my gaolers were not on me, I slipped my hand into the cannon's mouth, drew out the letter of the visitor, which he had rolled into a ball that I might grasp it the more readily, and pushed it up my sleeve. All the time I went on conversing with Chubbes, but at this juncture something happened which neither I nor

my friends had counted upon, and yet it was an incident we should have foreseen.

Trouveur, with his nose to the ground, ran distractedly to and fro, following my footsteps as I had doubled upon them. Finally, dashing forward with a bound and a series of short barks, he leaped upon me, making every demonstration of recognition.

"By Jove," cried the corporal, "the dog knows him."

For a moment I feared all was lost, and the rapid glance I cast at Droulet told me he shared my alarm. Unexpectedly, the sergeant came to my rescue.

"Knows him!" he scoffed in his superior wisdom. "Mr. Hadair was brought 'ere direct from the boat so closely guarded that neither man nor beast could get within ten feet of 'im — hand 'e never was hin Quebec before. Why 'e knows the town only through the bird's-eye view 'e 'as of hit 'ere from the ramparts."

"Zounds, you're right!" laughed the corporal. "I forgot."

These men had no knowledge of those days at St. Denis when we waited for the storm to break over our heads. Droulet had the presence of mind to call the dog off, under pretence that the animal's excitement was aggressive or due only to an exuberance of spirits.

"The poor brute has been kept chained and he is now beside himself with delight at finding himself free," I remarked to Chubbes as I turned away.

"Ay, sir, you hought to comprehend 'ow that would be," he answered with an impudent grin.

Trouveur was now back and fawning at my feet as if in apology for his blunder. Pretending to make his acquaintance, I patted his tawny head, and picking up a pebble threw it some distance for him to

bring to me. He was after it like a flash. Chubbes stood by, jesting over the manner in which I was entertaining myself.

"Your orders are that while on the ramparts I shall not hold communication with any individual whosoever. Do you think, sergeant, this means that I must not talk even to a dog?" I asked good-humoredly.

"Lud, no, sir," he responded, and therewith walked away to speak to the drum-major, who was at another part of the ramparts.

The dog had failed to bring back the stone. "Come here, sir," I called to him. Wary after my former rebuff, Trouveur did not obey.

"Ha, ha," I remarked to the corporal. "He is a French dog, and evidently looks on me with suspicion."

The man, but a few months out from England, turned to the sentry with a leer. "Hit his a queer country, Bill, where the dogs do not hunderstand the queen's henglish," he said in disgust.

"Hif we told that hin Lunnon, blast my buttons hif they would believe hus," replied the sentinel.

I now called to the animal in French and he came at once. Having caught the eye of Droulet I went on patting Trouveur, pulling his ears and talking to him.

"If your master understands me, he will please answer my questions affirmatively by a slight bow or some other sign of assent, and negatively by a shake of the head," said I, giving the collie's ears another tweak. "Will our friends in the town be able to furnish us with the tools we require?"

The man on the grass inclined his head so slightly that the motion was only just perceptible.

"Your master must not raise his head from his book, *mon pauvre chien*. I can see him well enough as he is, and the peak of my cap prevents the corporal from seeing my eyes. What about the newspaper reports of another contemplated insurrection. Are they true?"

A nod.

"Will the people of the United States help by invading the upper country?"

He hesitated, but after a moment's reflection, shrugged his shoulders. By it I readily understood him to mean that he did not know.

"Could you send a letter across the border by other means than the post?"

A nod.

"I will leave it in the cannon next Sunday."

Another nod. The sergeant, looking at his watch, now approached me.

"The time is up, Mr. Adair," he said. "I must ask you to go indoors."

"The time up? Oh, it cannot be. Wait a little longer, Chubbes," I urged. "Perhaps we might coax this fine dog in with us. Do you know who owns him?"

"I think he belongs to that ere gentleman what's readin' over there," volunteered the corporal.

The time was up and I had not said what I most wished to say.

"Hush," I whispered to the sergeant, "I'll try to make him follow me."

Again patting Trouveur, and in a voice resembling coaxing, I hurriedly asked Droulet, "When can you bring me the tools we need? I sent a list of them in my letter yesterday."

He looked at me blankly, and at once perceiving

I had asked a question for which he had no sign, I added, "I will try to bring the dog with me. Whistle him back, and as if it were his name, tell me when."

While still appearing to read, he smiled at this new stroke of invention. The guard were waiting for me, and I kept on coaxing the dog to follow. Suddenly, however, his master rose from the grass, whistled to the animal, and cried out as if calling his name, "Demain, Demain, Demain!" (To-morrow, to-morrow, to-morrow.)

The dog returned to him. I smiled, and there was a broad smile also upon the faces of the soldiers of the escort. But how different were the causes that produced the smile. Mine was because of the success of my ruse. The soldiers laughed in derision because they imagined I was defeated in an attempt to steal the stranger's dog.

"Never mind, sir," said the corporal. "If you are fond of dogs I will give you one I got from a French boy the other day."

"Of a French girl, you mean," said Sergeant Chubbes. "You are in love again, my lad. But give the major the dog—it will amuse him inside."

"No, thank you, corporal, I will not deprive the dog of his liberty," said I; "but I am obliged to you all the same."

When we got into our room and the second band of our men had gone out, I read the letter I had found in the mouth of the cannon. It contained the draft of the ditch, was unsigned, and written in French. The following is a translation:

MONSIEUR,—If you and any of your companions who decide to take the risk can, on some dark night to be

appointed, get to the place where you promenade daily, your friends in the town will easily be able to help you to escape from that point. We will send you the tools you mention and also a ball of stout twine. On the night we mutually arrange for your attempt, when you reach the position on the ramparts, you must make a certain signal (let us know what it had best be). Then, when it is answered, lower a package with the twine. The person watching will attach to it a rope-ladder, which you will haul up and make fast to one of the guns of the battery. By means of the ladder you can descend the cliff, and we will then conduct you to a place of safety. We must warn you and your comrades, however, monsieur, that the adventure will be unprecedented and hazardous in the extreme, and we beg you to count the cost before you decide upon it. If you are still resolved, you need not trouble yourselves to plan for anything beyond getting to the ramparts. Everything else will be ready for your flight to the States, and we will gladly defray all the expense of the undertaking.

What we, on our part, planned to do, was to saw off a bar of one of our windows. This would give us a space large enough to get through. Having loosened the bar, we would choose some dark and stormy evening, of which there are many during the autumn in this region. On a rainy night the sentinels usually sought shelter inside the porches before the doors. Perhaps, therefore, they would not be so watchful as at other times. Once through the opening between the bars, a man, by placing one foot on the iron crosspiece of the window and the other on the frame of the fence opposite, could easily climb to the top of the latter. Then, by means of a rope made of sheets and fastened to one of the window bars, he could let himself down on the other side and thus get free of the enclosure.

This we must do one by one and noiselessly, so as not to alarm the sentries outside or those stationed on the embankment above our quarters. We would, indeed, have to creep along as stealthily as Indians. But since we had taken pains to learn the position of every sentinel inside the fortress, we ought to be able, with precaution, to elude them, gain the saluting batteries, and from there descend the outer wall to the spot where our friends would be waiting to spirit us away.

Bold and dangerous as was the project, we resolved to accomplish it or die in the attempt. Only to Ramon, did I confide the secret that Jacquette was the prime mover in the plan to free us. To mention it to any one else might involve her in the tragic consequences if we should fail.

The next day brought us nothing, but about a week later, when we walked out one afternoon, I noticed Monsieur Beaufait on the ramparts. From the signal he made I felt sure he had with him the articles for which I had asked, but how to get them from him I did not know. They were too large to be laid down where I could pick them up, unobserved, and I had forgotten to arrange that they should be put into the cannon's mouth.

The young man managed very discreetly. After manœuvring about, he took his station near the flag-staff, which was at the farthest point from us. As it chanced on that day, being annoyed at Sergeant Chubbes' neglect of some part of his duty to us, instead of chatting with him as usual, I walked with one of our men. I had previously told the other two to keep the sergeant in conversation that I might be on the watch if anything should occur.

"The visitor over there has a packet for us," I

said to Culver, my companion. "I shall make a desperate effort to get it. When I open my coat you must do something to attract the attention of the guards."

As we were permitted to walk about freely within the space allowed us, and the young man was, through the negligence of the sentinels, within the edge of our bounds, I paced forth and back several times, always getting a little nearer to him, until I was able to speak to him softly as if humming a tune. "*Soyez pret! Soyez pret!*"¹ I sang.

Having repeated the words once more, to make sure he understood, I threw open my coat as though I was overwarm from exercise, and drew close to him. He was standing with his face toward me and his hands behind his back. At this instant Culver uttered a cry and ran to look over the wall, as if he saw some sudden happening in the market-square at the base of the cliff. The guards looked toward the place.

Seizing the moment, I brushed against the stranger, took the packet from his hand, and approaching the part of the wall nearest to me gazed down below, as if I too were interested in what had attracted the attention of the others. At the same time I was able to conceal the parcel in the breast of my coat as I buttoned it again.

"My friend, get away at once," I hummed, addressing the young man. He strolled off, and I walked toward the others.

"What are you looking at?" I inquired. "From this height the people walking about in the market-place below look like flies or a colony of industrious ants, do they not?"

¹ Be ready.

"I thought I saw a fox on the terrace," exclaimed the man who had been my companion.

"Then it was doubtless the adjutant's pet fox," said the sergeant. And so the sentinels decided.

For the first time since my imprisonment I felt the short interval we were allowed to spend out of doors to be interminable. The packet concealed in the bosom of my coat caused it to bulge out enough to make me fear detection.

"Sergeant, I feel a little ill; I will go in," I said at last. He offered no objection, but sent a soldier with me.

When I reached our prison room I retired to the farther end of it, which was quite shadowy, pulled out my bed, and threw myself upon it. Here I remained until after the sergeant left us locked in for the night.

By the first gray light of dawn we examined the package. Folded in a newspaper was all I had asked for, — the file, the steel spring such as is used for the mainsprings of watches, a vial of acid, a card on which a quantity of twine was wound flat, and a gardener's knife with a saw blade.

As the sentinel was dozing outside, we found the time propitious for beginning our work. Picking up a hickory stick from our firewood I bent it into a bow handle for the steel spring, and with these and the file I made another saw. Then, cautiously, we marked the place where the bar of our window was to be cut.

Alas, scarcely had I touched the saw to the iron, when I discovered that the file was too coarse. Moreover, the noise it made would have attracted the attention of the sentry had I not stopped at once. This put an end to our task for the time,

but when all was quiet again we perfected our arrangements.

Ramon was to wield the saw, the others were to busy themselves whittling bits of wood with pieces of broken glass and make all the racket they dared, while I, being acknowledged a good talker, was to play the part of entertaining the guard.

Before long I found my portion of the work by no means the least arduous. To distract the attention of the sentinels I tried every artifice suggested by my varied opportunities for the study of character. At every change of guard the corporal was wont to cry out, and the sentinel relieved to repeat after him, the warning to the new sentinel, — "The sentry is to hold no communication with the prisoners, nor shall he allow any one to converse with them, or to enter their room, or pass them any paper." The same order was pasted up on the wall outside.

Often, therefore, my efforts were utterly fruitless, and at these times our work necessarily ceased during that guard. But usually the soldiers looked upon the order as a matter of form. Sometimes, as I feigned to be very careful lest the sentinel outside the enclosure should hear his comrade's disobedience of instructions, our sentry would come up close to my window. We would continue the conversation thus, while my companions sawed at the bar of the other window, only six or eight feet from where he stood. That he might not turn around quickly and discover them, we always took the precaution of hanging out a blanket in such a position that its heavy folds deadened the grating sound. It also served as a screen, preventing any one from the walls above, or the angle opposite,

from seeing our work, if chance brought a soldier or officer that way.

Thus we continued our task, always working in the daytime and only when the sentinel on duty could be distracted from watching us. When the work of each day was finished, we filled up the interstice made by the saw in the iron with a bit of candle tallow blackened with soot. Lest attention might be attracted to that part of the grating as being more greasy than the rest, in a supposed ardor of neatness, one forenoon, we cleaned the glass of the window, and under pretence of dusting the bars rubbed them over with a greased cloth, so that every part of them looked alike. But we sadly needed a finer file and the material to make still another saw. Those we had were wearing out.

It was some time since any of our friends had appeared on the ramparts. Doubtless a long spell of cloudiness and rain had something to do with their desertion of the place. Alack, if we had only been ready then to take advantage of the inclement weather. A pleasant day came at last, and that afternoon when we went out, to my great joy, I beheld Monsieur Droulet, loitering near the spot where the last messenger had been.

Unfortunately I could no longer leave a message for him in the cannon. Since our last use of it as a postoffice, some practical joker, visiting the fort, had spiked one of the guns of the saluting battery. As a result, every piece of ordnance was now daily examined by an officer of the artillery. Prison life arouses all of the captive's natural ingenuity, however, and before long I found an opportunity to tell Droulet what we wanted.

The master cook of the officer's mess was an old

Frenchman, a privileged character, who had permission to come within our bounds whenever he pleased. In his youth one of Bonaparte's conscripts, he had been taken prisoner by Wellington's troops and sent to England, where he remained until the offer of a handsome wage from the mess brought him to Canada.

When he came out in his little white cap and jacket he used to chat with me in the French language. Frequently, too, he disputed in English with the sergeant, maintaining that no troops in the world could equal those of France, nor could any warrior or statesman hold a candle to the fame of his emperor. The day before, he had gone away in a fury against Chubbes because the latter contended that no body of French soldiers could resist a British charge. Now as I walked with the sergeant I suddenly thought to ask him if he had made up the quarrel with the old man.

"No, hindeed, sir, I 'ave not," he said.

"By the way, your allusion to that bayonet charge was rather hard upon him, but his explanation of the rout of the French was certainly unique," I added quizzically.

"Why, what was it?"

The sergeant bridled at the recollection of the argument. I saw that our friend was watching me, and keeping my eyes on him significantly, I continued,—

"The old Frenchman said, sergeant—ho, ho, I must repeat it just as he said it,"—and then hastily I rattled off in French, "We need another file, finer than the last, and another piece of spring steel; bring them here in the morning and place them in the little hollow you will find where I am now standing.

I will take them when I come out. We are nearly ready now. — Which means, sergeant," I added, turning to Chubbes with a laugh, "that the French soldiers fled precipitately because, being extremely sensitive, they could not bear to be pricked by the English bayonets. Ha, ha, ha!"

"Pricked!" exclaimed the sergeant in a rage. "His that what the hold fool calls being run through the body? Hit his lucky for 'im hi did not catch up 'is lingo hor hi would 'ave poked 'im with ha wengeance. Pricked hindeed!"

By the convulsed countenance of our friend I saw he had much to do to restrain a shout of laughter. But he evidently understood my method of translating, for the next day I found the file and the wire where I had told him to leave them.

All went well until one evening when the sergeant came into our room while we were at supper. The benches being occupied, he seated himself on the window ledge and, as luck would have it, leaned against the very bar that was nearly cut through. At the same time he tossed aside a stocking, apparently flung there carelessly, but which had in reality been so placed to cover the weak spot in the bar.

His chance action was unnoticed by the others, but I perceived it instantly and, as he was a robust man, I feared his weight against the bar would cause it to give way. In another moment Ramon, taking in the situation also, called out, —

"Ha, sergeant, here is room on the settle beside me. Sit here and take a cup of tea with us."

"Thank you, I 'ave 'ad supper," Chubbes answered, shifting his position.

Every second added to the probability that we should be discovered. In desperation I rose from

the table, and sauntering to the opposite window, made a sign to him that I wanted to speak to him. Happily for us, he came; and we breathed freer.

I put to him some trifling question with an air of secrecy, and presently he turned to go. Then, to our dismay, we saw that his white jacket was marked for some inches above and below the shoulders with the impression of the grease and soot we had put on the bar, the very indenture made in the iron by the file being plainly visible.

If he should go out with that mark upon him all would inevitably be revealed. Yet how was this catastrophe to be averted? I availed myself of the first ruse that occurred to me, there was no time for reflection.

"Sergeant, I feel really ill," said I, putting a hand to my side as if in sudden distress. "No doubt it is the trouble of the heart from which I sometimes suffer. If you will go to the canteen, get a pint of spirits, and smuggle it to us here, I shall be very grateful. With the change you may as well get a mug of beer for yourself, too."

As I spoke I slipped half a dollar into his pocket. Gratified, he turned away, but again I called him back, crying, "Why, where have you been, sergeant? There is a dark spot on your jacket. Wait a moment and I will brush it off for you."

He stopped short, and with a cloth I rubbed off the mark as well as I could, until I had made it at last indistinct.

"What is it?" he asked.

"Only a little dust," said I.

"Oh, I was leaning against the wall in the barracks," he decided. "Thank you, sir, I will be back with the spirits presently."

After that occasion we took good care to carefully rub the bar so that not the least mark would be made upon even the glove of any one who might take hold of it. Moreover, to prevent the sergeant from again sitting on the window ledge, we contrived to have it lumbered up with one thing or another, and a chair was always ready for him if he wished to be seated when he came in to see us.

When the others were at work, while I chatted with the guard, I invariably listened intently for the sound of the saw, but I seldom distinguished it. If it ever chanced to grate louder than usual, however, the noise was immediately drowned by the shrill notes of a fife we had borrowed from one of the band boys, and upon which our men had taken to practising vigorously by turns.

At last, after infinite trouble and great perseverance, the bar was cut through. This step accomplished, we also succeeded in informing our friends in the town that we would make the attempt to escape on the very next dark and rainy night, between the hours of ten and twelve o'clock. But alas, for three weeks thereafter, the weather continued unpropitiously fine for our purpose; the evenings were moonlit and exceedingly beautiful.

Sunday afternoons there were always many visitors to the citadel, and in going upon the ramparts we tried to appear as neat as possible. On a certain Sunday one of our men, who was usually eager to take the air, refused to go out, saying his clothes were too shabby. He retired to the back of the room and, thinking he was unhappy and discouraged, I went to him, said I would willingly loan him anything he needed from my scant wardrobe, and that he must not become ill just when a storm might

come up any time and afford us the opportunity we wanted to make the effort to get out of the fort.

"Ah, sir, you are too kind to me," he faltered. "I wish I were dead."

Unable to get more out of him, I left him to himself and paced the room waiting for my turn to go on the ramparts. When Ramon came in with his band I saw by his flushed face and perturbed manner that something had happened.

"We are betrayed," he muttered as he passed me.

"Betrayed! Impossible! Whom do you suspect?"

"That fellow has sent a communication to the adjutant, telling all," he insisted, pointing to the man who had made the excuse to stay in. There-with he strode over to the bed upon which the coward lay, dragged him out of it and cast him on the ground at our feet. "You have revealed our plans," he cried, shaking the wretched man vindictively.

"I threw a note out to the sentinel, but no sooner was it gone than I regretted what I had done. I only said you hoped to escape. I did not tell about the bar," whined the miscreant, half dead from fear of our vengeance.

"The men will certainly kill you if they hear of your treachery," said I. "You must know nothing about the note — do you understand?"

"Yes, sir," he rejoined, entirely cowed.

Leaving Rycerski to keep watch over him, I went out to exercise, as usual, and the sergeant, walking with me, entertained me with the story.

"Pshaw," said I, "the sergeant of the guard who carried the tale higher must have wanted to injure you, Chubbes. No doubt he is jealous because you make a few perquisites out of your prisoners."

This was indeed the case. Luckily for us, the adjutant was away on leave. He would have ferreted out the whole plot. The officer in his place was a younger man. That evening he inspected us, but we perceived at once that he gave no credence to the tale. The truth is, all the officers considered escape for us as utterly impossible, and were confident no man in his senses would attempt it.

From this time, every night after the lights were out, Ramon and I took turns in mounting guard before the window, so that none among our men who might lose courage should have an opportunity to disclose our project to the sentinel.

CHAPTER TWENTIETH

NOTHING VENTURE, NOTHING HAVE

A FEW days after this occurrence, I received a letter from Lord Durham's secretary informing me that I was to be sent to England on a ship that had brought out military stores to Canada, the Royal Adelaide. A detachment of soldiers invalided home were to go at the same time. From this hour, whenever I went on the ramparts, I alternately watched the wharf where the vessel was being laden with her new cargo, and turning my eyes to the heavens, prayed for rain.

I had made a small hollow in the top of the parapet wall by picking out a piece of the cement. On the fourteenth of October, when I went out as usual, I had the last details of our plan written on a scrap of paper and a letter to Jacquette telling her that if we were unable to get out of the fortress by the end of the week I must needs sail away. Having paced up and down for a while, I observed Droulet on the promenade with two ladies. As they turned, my heart seemed to stop beating, for one of the demoiselles was Jacquette herself.

When they came nearer she smiled, but betrayed by no sign that we were other than strangers. Her escort looked fixedly at me. In reply to his unspoken question I warily held up the bit of paper for an instant, and having made sure he followed it with his eyes, deposited it and the letter in the cavity in the wall and covered it with the piece of

mortar. We were standing with our faces toward the city; thus the sentinels could not perceive the by-play. Then I sauntered around carelessly. But before my half-hour of exercise was over, I perceived that the young man had possessed himself of the communications. The next day I found his answer in the same place.

"The Royal Adelaide will not sail for two days yet," it said. "And if all else fails, the ship shall be delayed longer. From the appearance of the clouds we may expect a storm to-night. Your friends will be at the appointed spot, as they have been every night for four weeks."

When I had contrived to read the note, I looked toward the glacis beyond the ditch. There lay Droulet on the grass, with Jacquette's dog beside him. I signalled to him with my handkerchief, as was previously agreed. He glanced up at the sky, smiled, and turning, looked toward the mountains of Maine.

"Perfectly understood," I said to myself. "To-night we shall either be free or dead men."

Ten minutes later, the sergeant coming to me said, "He who does not go indoors now, sir, will get a wet jacket."

"*Allons*," I answered. "Yet I should like after all to get wet to the skin to-night, just to see how it would feel."

The rain now began in good earnest. The sergeant stayed with us during supper in order to carry Sutherland's to him when it should be ready. As Chubbes was leaving I bade him good-night, adding jocosely, —

"You are not put out with me, sergeant, for calling you Sutherland's aid-de-camp?"

"Humph, I would rather be his hangman," he retorted surlily. "For fifty pounds I would hang the whole lot of you."

"Not me, sergeant, surely not me?"

"Yes, you as well as any of the rest."

"Ah, thank you. Good-night again, sergeant."

I laughed aloud, but as he closed the door and locked it after him, I shook my fist at him. "Rascal," I muttered, "that speech of yours has cured me of any sympathy I had for you because of the pickle you will be in to-morrow."

Three other men, Culver, Hull, and Parker, having decided to go with my comrade and me, we agreed to try to get away early. Each man made up a small packet of clothing. Ramon and I rolled our cloaks lengthwise, so that we could take them through the space between the bars. We each put on a double set of underclothes and stockings; our boots were rolled in our coats. This arranged, we distributed the rest of our belongings among the men who elected to remain. I also gave them all the money I had, to buy the little necessities with which I had been accustomed to provide them.

When the sentinel was changed at eight o'clock, we had agreed upon the part that each man going was to take in the carrying out of the plan, and the route each was to take.

"If we can be ready in time, and this sentry is a good-natured fellow, we would better go during his guard," I whispered to the others.

The sentinel presently came to one of the windows to see what we were about.

"Will you have tobacco for a smoke, soldier," I asked, offering him a piece.

"I don't care if I do," said he.

I went back into the room, ostensibly to get a light for our pipes, but really to learn how Ramon was succeeding in loosening the bar.

"There will be an hour's work to get it out," he replied in a low tone. "We would better not try to go while this fellow is on duty."

I withdrew to the other window. The sentinel and I lit our pipes, and I started him chatting about the Tower of London, where he had once been stationed, and to which I would probably be consigned if I should be landed on British soil.

The rain had ceased for the time, but the wind whistled and sighed around the lofty summit of Cape Diamond. Within doors one of our men created such a din with his fife, and two or three others with their singing and dancing, that the sound made by those who worked at the bar was drowned by the greater noise. At last, however, there came a crash that startled even myself. It was the final effort. At the same moment Culver threw over a bench.

"What the deuce is the matter?" I cried, turning about in pretended annoyance. "Who fell over the bench?"

"It was I, sir," replied the culprit, apologetically.

"It is outrageous to cause such a disturbance, after the gun has been fired, too," I said crossly. "Come, men, get to your beds. It is time to stop your carrying on."

The task was over, I knew. But I kept the sentry engaged in conversation until the bar could be so replaced that its loose condition would not be observed without close inspection.

Our lights were out and all was quiet when the relief came. The new sentinel was an old soldier. He remained a little while in the porch before the

door, glad of the shelter from the wind. I went to the window, opened the sash, and called to him. He came out.

"Ah," I said, pretending to recognize him, "is that you? How are you to-night?"

"Well, sir, thank you."

"Sentinel," I continued, "one of my men has a severe cold and I want to light a fire that I may make him a glass of punch. Indeed, a taste of it would do you no harm this wild night. Will you please search outside for a few chips to kindle the blaze?"

"Certainly, sir, but I fear they will be too wet to burn," he replied, as he laid his musket inside the porch and began to pick up a few bits of wood.

"Thank you, I am sorry to trouble you, sentinel," I declared as he handed them through the bars.

I busied myself, talked to my imaginary sick man, got the fire burning, and returned to the window.

"You see, sentinel, I want to do all I can for my poor fellows while I am still with them," I said.

"Yes, sir," he answered. "We hear you are to be sent away in the morning."

"So soon? How did you learn this?"

"Have you not been informed of it, sir?"

"No, indeed."

He forthwith proceeded to tell me the news had come up from the guardroom. Having listened in silence, I seated myself and ostensibly forgot I had promised him a draught of good liquor. At last arousing myself, I exclaimed, —

"Well, well, my friend, since I must go in the morning there is all the more reason why we should drink to-night. Will you have old Jamaica? Or stay, I have some fine London porter. The

doctor advised me to get it because I have not been well."

"I'll take the porter, if you please, sir," he chuckled.

I brought a bottle to the window and began to cut the wire, still talking to him.

"Captain Rycerski, please hand me a glass."

Ramon brought one, holding it in such a manner that the soldier could not see the few drops of laudanum he had put into it. I poured a draught for the sentry and handed it to him. My comrade brought a second glass, and taking a smaller quantity for myself, I wished the sentry good luck.

"The same to you, sir," he said; "and may you harrive safe at the hend hof your voyage."

"Thank you," I rejoined, adding mentally, "Heaven grant it may be so."

He drained his glass, and having tasted the contents of mine, I smacked my lips.

"Bah! It seems to me very bitter," said I.

"Lud sir, that his the taste hof hall porter," laughed the soldier. "Hi 'ave not tasted hany so good since hi left Lunnon."

I asked my companions to join us in drinking from the quart bottle, but they declined, under one pretext or another, and I handed it to the sentry bidding him to finish it, which he did without urging. Soon the drug began to take effect. His voice grew thick; he stuttered, and finally attempted to march up and down. My comrade, the men, and I took counsel together.

"If the rounds come and discover the guard in this drunken state, suspicion will be aroused," I maintained, "and since the bar is loose, our plot will be immediately discovered. Let us risk all now,

even though we have been unable to get the countersign. While you prepare the rope of sheets and let yourselves down into the ditch, I will talk to the sentinel again at the other window."

So it was arranged, but straightway another obstacle presented itself. The soldier, having staggered along the wall, struck it noisily. For a moment we feared he had attracted the attention of the guard outside the fence. All was soon quiet again, however; but our sentry had stopped before the window through which we were to go and stood leaning against it.

"No matter," I whispered, "I will manage this."

"Contrive to have him turn his face from the window," muttered Ramon.

Not daring to raise my voice, I crept as close to him as I could and said, "Sentinel, the major wants to speak to you at the other window."

"Yes, yes, certainly," he stammered, and lurched over to it.

I was there before him, a glass of old Jamaica in my hand. He took it readily and gulped it down. I did not venture to offer him any more, but putting the flask into his hand I said, "Hold this a moment until I light my pipe."

"Darned if it isn't good, sir," he hiccupped. "Better than can be had at any public house in this d— town. I have tried them all, so I know, — hic — hic — hic." Scarcely had I left him when I heard the gurgle of the liquor as the remainder of it passed from the flask down his throat.

"Be ready, lads, and when I say 'rain' start without delay," I said under my breath. Returning to my post I smoked away, asked the sentry to smoke, and gave him my pipe.

"Come closer to the window," I urged. Presently he was close beside me. I thrust my arm through the bars and threw it familiarly about his neck, ready to strangle him if he should try to give the alarm.

"Ah, it *rains* a little now," I said significantly.

I could hear the tearing off of the buttons of the clothes of the first man who passed through the opening between the bars of the window. Another man, and still another followed him. Then Ramon tapped me on the shoulder, warning me to be ready. One of those who had elected to stay took my place with the sentry and twined his arm around the fellow's neck as mine had been.

"What am I to do if he makes any noise?" he asked.

"Choke him, but don't kill him," I said, with no waste of words.

It was now my turn. But alack, being larger than the others I could not get through the narrow space. Drawing back I stripped off my coat and waistcoat, and tried again.

Ah, this time I was able to force myself through, but not without compressing and scraping my chest and shoulders. Leaving the waistcoat, I carried my coat in my teeth over the fence. I descended easily by the aid of the rope of sheets. The other men were waiting for me. Noiselessly we skirted along the walls, keeping within the shadow of the lamps that were over each door. Fortunately for us they shed only a faint light.

The rain was now only a drizzle, but the sound of the water pouring down from the conductors into the tubs placed to catch it, and the moaning of the wind, covered the sound of our footsteps. One by one we moved along toward the sheltering eaves of a small

cook-house, our first rendezvous. All had reached it except Parker. Unluckily, in coming around, he stumbled against a tin pail that had been placed under a spout to catch the water.

"Merciful Heavens, we are done for," exclaimed Ramon.

The clatter of course attracted the attention of the sentinel on the wall above us. As we pressed close to the wall, we knew he was peering down through the darkness at the very spot where we were crouching.

"Who goes there?" he challenged.

We held our breath and remained motionless, expecting every moment to be discovered. Again he cried out, and still a third time.

This last challenge was answered by the guard just emerging from under the gate where the guard-house was. Happily for us, at that minute they were coming to relieve the different posts, and the noise made by Parker in upsetting the bucket was ascribed to them.

They came on, changed sentinels at the first post, and continued up the hill, actually passing within a few feet of where we were. Though the night was dark, from the glimmer of the lantern carried by the drummer boy we saw their features plainly as they climbed the path. They were buttoned up in their watch-coats, and wore tall bearskin caps. They relieved the man above and returned. As they passed us again, we crouched lower. One of our men had tied his packet in a white handkerchief. Fearing it might be seen, I leaned forward and covered it with the skirt of my coat. The rounds went on, pursuing their way outside the enclosure of our prison.

We were still so near the point of our escape, and so short a time had elapsed that I could hear the man we had left at the window pulling in the sheets from the fence, and the low voice of another rousing the soldier whom we had drugged. Surely these sounds, so loud to our ears rendered acute from anxiety, must be heard by the rounds. They, however, having no suspicion, and with the thick collars of their coats turned up to protect them from the weather, took no notice of what seemed to us so palpable.

The opening of the door of the enclosure and the challenge to the outer sentinel evidently completed the work of stirring up our soldier inside, for now we heard his voice loudly challenging, "Who goes there?"

"Relief."

"Advance relief and give the countersign."

"Port arms, front, march!" rang out the order.

We knew the guard was changed and presently, by the flicker of their lantern, we could see them marching back toward the guardhouse, our dupe last of the file and trying his best to walk straight.

Again we moved forward, silently, and on our hands and knees, making a circuit as we passed the storehouses, in order to keep in the darkness beyond the sperm-oil lights. Again Parker made a slight noise, and a sentinel moved down toward us. We were indeed near discovery, and lay prone on the ground.

Once more, almost as if by a special providence, we were saved. Dogs were always prowling around the fort. The sentry apparently mistook us for some of these homeless animals, for when he had wellnigh come up to us, he wheeled about,

paced back over his beat, and entered his sentry-box.

A third time we moved forward as cautiously as ever Indian stole upon his foe. At last we were in the centre of the parade and opposite to the magazine. All of a sudden, danger was close by; and it came from an unexpected direction.

From the darkness behind us broke a sharp call. "Who goes there?"

Down on our faces we lay, every man of us. Some one came running our way, passed us, and made across the parade to the officers' quarters.

"It is an alarm," Ramon whispered to me. "The man came direct from our prison and has gone to the adjutant."

"No, it is not," I maintained, although I really did not know; but the courage of our party must be kept up at all hazards. "I'll wager it is the sergeant who has rooms next to ours. His child is ill. Perhaps he has gone for the doctor. Keep cool, my lads, there are now only three sentinels between us and the main walls. It will not be so difficult to pass them as it was to get by the others."

The first was at the magazine, opposite to us; he was in his box. Beyond was, we were aware, another whose duty it was to guard the rear of the powder-house and a pile of firewood, and to prevent soldiers from sneaking off to the canteen. Farther on was stationed the third, at the entrance to the officers' mess. His box faced the messroom, so his back would be toward us.

There was no further occasion for crawling. Accordingly I gave the word to march, the first man to go ten paces and halt, and so on. In this way I had sent forward all except Parker, whose nervousness

prevented him from hearing my directions. I encouraged, flattered, threatened him, but to no purpose. At last, laying hold of him, I dragged him up to the others and gave him into Ramon's care.

We marched again and halted, all except Parker, who kept on. Instead of going in the direction agreed upon, however, he ran toward the sentinel, who hearing the slight noise he made, promptly called out the challenge. Of course he received no answer.

"Onward," I whispered to the others. "Keep to the left, pass the old telegraph station,¹ and come around to the flagstaff. I will try to find that fool Parker."

"Do you think he means to betray us?" asked Hull. "He has acted strangely ever since we started."

"No. Sickness and imprisonment have told upon him. He does not know what he is doing."

His whereabouts was soon made plain to us, for we heard a crash at the woodpile and knew he had fallen there. To go to him now was impossible without discovery. The challenge was taken up by the sentinel at the officers' mess. Ramon and our party had passed, and the only course left to me was to go round the telegraph building to the right side, near the officers' stables. The sentinel there had, I knew, nothing but side arms, and I intended to keep far enough away from him to prevent his using them.

I stopped short, unfastened my cloak, put on my cap, which from its gold band and its shape resembled

¹ This was merely a signal station. The electric telegraph had been rendered practicable by Morse only the year before, that is, in 1837.

those worn by the officers, and boldly walked forward. I had nearly passed the guard without being noticed, when suddenly he cried out, "Halt! Who goes there?"

"Officer of the guard," I said in a low tone.

"Advance, officer of the guard, and give the countersign."

As I have said, we had not the countersign, because the prison rounds had not made their visit before our departure. But it was generally an odd number and in the "teens." There was nothing for me but to make a guess at it. Putting my hand to my mouth, when I was about a dozen yards from him I said, "'Teen," leaving him to fill in the blank as he fancied he caught the sound. The ruse succeeded.

"Pass, officer of the guard; all's well," he bawled.

I passed, made a circuit, and gained the ramparts. The rest were waiting for me, and my comrade ran forward.

"Our friends are not here," he said in desperation.

"Impossible," I cried. "Have you given the signal?"

"Yes, but they do not answer."

I ran along to the different points to see if those who had promised to help us were below; but no flash of a light came to us, through the darkness beneath our feet. Meanwhile Parker among the wood was making noise enough to arouse the whole garrison, or so it seemed to us.

"What is to be done?" queried Ramon.

"Cut down the halyards of the flag. With the rope we can descend the wall," I cried.

A penknife was the only sharp instrument we had, but he used it to good purpose. In the meantime I

stationed each of the other two men at the ends of the telegraph building to warn us of the approach of any guard, while we arranged for our descent. In a few moments they signalled to us.

"H-sh," said Ramon, "there is some one talking."

Listening, we heard the officer of the guard actually speaking to one of these men.

"Who are you, sir, and what are you doing here?"

"And pray who are you?" jauntily answered Culver, imitating the voice of the other.

"I am the officer of the guard, and you, I am confident, are a subaltern playing a trick," he replied; "but you must give me your name or I will report you."

"My name would be of no use to you," retorted Culver, striving, as we understood, to get away.

The officer rushed toward him, but we could hear Culver running toward the ramparts. The other followed and, as luck would have it, when he came nearly opposite to where Ramon and I were standing, my comrade behind the flagstaff and I on the farther side of one of the guns of the saluting battery, he cried out, "Sergeant, pass the word to the sergeant of the guard to turn out the picket."

"Sergeant of the guard, turn out the picket," was passed along the whole chain of sentinels, and the roll of the drum called out the corps.

"Here he is, sir, among the wood," announced the sentinel who had first challenged us.

By the lantern lights, from where we stood in the shadow, we plainly witnessed the whole commotion.

The officers who until now, late as it was, had not risen from the mess table, turned out also to learn the cause of the alarm, some buckling on their swords, while others ran forward to the woodpile.

An artillery man with his dog found Parker, and as soon as the poor wretch was discovered the cry arose from a hundred British throats, "The American prisoners! The American prisoners are escaping."

This shout of course added to the hubbub. Many of the soldiers and some of the officers ran toward our prison room; others dragged Parker toward the guardhouse, while a band started off to search for us. Later we heard the good fellow could not be induced by either bribes or threats to say anything concerning us.

Amid all this commotion, while we were concealed as I have said, and the other two men lay hiding in an embrasure of the wall, Ramon persevered and cut the rope. Now, for the first time we realized that if we should attempt to haul it down the noise of the pulleys would at once direct the searching party to the place where we stood. We had no alternative but to leap from the wall into the ditch. If taken, we should be promptly executed. Nothing worse than death lay before us.

"I will go first," I said. "If I am killed, you may attempt the feat or not as you please. I am the heaviest among you. If I succeed, there will be all the greater chance for you."

Mounting the wall, I swung down over it and for an instant hung on by my hands. I let go. During the next moment all the acts of my life seemed to pass before me, as a man's deeds and misdeeds are said to pass before his mind when he is dying. Providence did not decree this to be my last hour. I alighted on my feet on the solid rock; then I fell back on my head and lay for a moment stunned. I thought every bone in my body was broken.

"Are you hurt?" The question came anxiously from my comrade on the height above.

"I am alive. Throw down your cloaks and I will spread them out, so that you may not come down with full force upon this accursed rock, which is a little harder than even a Tory's heart," I answered, writhing with pain. In striving to get upon my feet, I found I had sprained my ankle, the consequence of the folly of bracing myself as I fell.

The others threw down their cloaks and packets. I arranged them in a heap, and, in a low tone, directed Culver at what point to let himself down. He fell, as I had done, and the blood gushed from his nose and mouth. One of his legs was broken. Our plight did not deter Hull and Rycerski. Hull jumped a few feet to the right of where Culver had dropped, and he was so fortunate as to alight on the pile of cloaks.

"Jupiter!" he exclaimed, "What a jump!"

I could not but laugh at him, although we were in so serious a predicament. Ramon also dropped on the pile and toppled over upon us. He, too, was unhurt. He had cut off the end of the flag rope and brought it with him.

There were about fourteen or fifteen feet more of the cliff to descend. Hull and Ramon held the rope and I slid down. At one extremity of the ditch and against the bastion, we found a piece of cedar post which helped us much at this juncture. Culver managed to follow me. Then Hull held the rope alone and Ramon came down, Hull following after having tied the rope to the post.

They clambered over a wall at the base of the descent—Culver and I were already on the other side of it. He could not walk, so they helped him

up the ascent to the glacis on the farther side of the ditch. I was able to crawl along unaided, dragging my leg after me. The wall was faced with dry stone and, by thrusting our hands into the interstices and using knees and feet—I could only trust to one foot—we reached the summit.

“At last we may rest a few moments,” I ejaculated as we threw ourselves upon the ground.

From our position on the height we witnessed the search made for us. Lighted torches were flashed into every nook and corner of the ramparts, while we sat opposite to them with only the width of the fifty-foot ditch between us.

But we had no time to waste in moralizing over the matter. Taking off my cravat I tightly bound it around my ankle, and we resumed our way. Hull carried poor Culver, and I hopped along leaning on Ramon’s shoulder. From where we were there was a descent to a natural terrace used as a public promenade. We gained it, reached a turnstile, passed through it and found ourselves in one of the streets of the town.

CHAPTER TWENTY-FIRST

WANDERERS

WE were now outside the palisaded wall of the old château. From the ramparts, we had often seen ladies walking in this garden and knew it to be connected with the residence of the governor-general.

"We would better separate," I suggested as we halted before it. "If the town watch encounter four men, two of them almost disabled, they will ask unpleasant questions."

It was agreed that Hull and Culver should hide in the garden while my comrade and I would try to find our Canadian friends. If successful we would send back for our comrades. If they heard nothing from us after waiting a reasonable time, they must needs shift for themselves. We then made a pact that, if taken, nothing that could be done to us would induce us to reveal anything of their future plans, nor would they betray us.

"God keep you," I exclaimed, as I grasped the hands of those who were to remain behind.

When Ramon had bidden them a hopeful *au revoir*, also, he and I descended the terrace. At the residence of the receiver-general the sentinel mistook our cloaks and caps for those of officers, and presented arms to us. We politely returned the salute in military fashion, and passed on.

It was so late that the streets were deserted. Sometimes I crawled on the ground; again, sup-

ported by my comrade, I hopped along the unpaved way. Before long we heard the voices of people approaching, and ere we could reach a corner they came up to us and stopped near where we were. There were two gentlemen and a lady.

"Sir," said I, accosting one of the men in French, "we are strangers here and have lost our way. Will you be so kind as to direct us to the palace gate?"

For answer he turned his lantern so that its rays shone upon my face, and I at once perceived that he recognized me.

"You are Major Adair, the American prisoner," he cried in astonishment.

I made a virtue of necessity. "Well, what if I am?" I answered boldly.

The other man started forward to look at me, and the lady gave a little shriek. "Mon Dieu, how did you escape from the citadel?" she cried.

"I jumped the wall, madame."

"Merciful Heaven, are you not hurt?" she inquired with womanly pity.

"My ankle is badly wrenched, but no matter. Gentlemen, will you kindly direct me to the house of some good French Canadian? You are, I presume, patriots?"

"That we are not," said the first man, tersely. "And since we are two to two, you shall go no further. We must turn you over to the authorities, who are already searching the city for you."

"H'm, you must, eh!" I cried, thrusting my hand into my breast.

He thought I had a weapon, and not being armed himself changed his tactics.

"Oh, have nothing to do with detaining them—they are desperate men," implored the lady.

Willing enough to get out of their dilemma by yielding to her entreaties, they directed us to the gate, and proceeded on their way.

We did not immediately follow the route they indicated, fearing that, in spite of a promise they made they might betray us. Crossing a market-place we came at last to one of the gates of the town. A party of soldiers stood about it listening to a distant commotion and wondering what it was all about. Not daring to pass them, we made a detour, creeping along in the shadow of the sloping roofs of the houses. In this way we reached the wicket and slipped through it unperceived. Scarcely were we outside the gate, when the voice of the sentinel rang out in challenge. A party of military were approaching in double quick time.

"Rounds, sergeant, turn out! It is the rounds, turn out!" cried one of the loitering soldiers.

We hid in a clump of bushes by the wayside until the rounds had passed. The party was, we afterwards learned, a posse of men hot in pursuit of us. Such a detachment had been sent to every gate of the city to prevent our leaving it. But we were too alert for them. They had actually shut us out, and we had no wish to be shut in again. I shall always remember that the way by which we came out was called Hope Gate.

"Whether the next man we meet be friend or foe we must compel him to take us to a place of safety," I declared.

Before long we descried a youth coming toward us. In his hand he swung a lantern and, doubtless to beguile the loneliness of the way, he was whistling blithely.

"He is English," muttered Ramon.

"No Briton ever whistled that air," I answered. "He is a French Canadian."

The tune was that of a French ballad, sweet to me because I had first heard it trolled by Jacquette at St. Denis. While I listened now, the words of the old song came to me involuntarily, as she had sung them.

"C'est l'vent frivoltant, c'est l'vent !
C'est l'vent frivoltant.
Derrier' chez nous ya-t-un-étang —
C'est l'vent frivoltant !
Par les yeux lui sort'nt diamants.
C'est l'vent qui vole, qui frivole."

When the young fellow got opposite to us, I called to him. For an instant he wavered. Then he crossed to where we were and held up his light boldly to look at us, keeping himself in shadow. Nevertheless, as I peered at him, I uttered an involuntary cry, while he, on his part, recoiled limply, and the lantern fell to the ground. For the face that looked forth at me from the disguise of the pulled-down cap and the turned-up collar of a student of Laval College, was the face of Jacquette.

"My God, Nial, is it you or your ghost?" she faltered, almost fainting from excitement, joy, and fear. "Ramon, dear friend! God be thanked, you are both free!"

"Jacquette, what madness is this? You alone here, and at this hour?"

"A boy is safe anywhere and at any time," my dear love replied with a catch in her voice. "Oh, Nial, did you think I could stay calmly at home while you and Ramon were struggling for liberty

and life? Droulet, Monsieur Beaufait — the other friend who volunteered to help you — and I watched at the appointed spot until long after the hour you named. But you did not come, and they concluded you had been unable to pass the guards. In vain I entreated them to wait a little longer. They said you would not make the attempt to-night, and they took me back to Madame St. Germain's. She is now living in Quebec, and I am staying with her. Louis Droulet is her nephew. But I could not be content, so I slipped around to the kitchen, called Pascal, who was dozing over the fire waiting for any orders I might give him and, with him for a protector, I stole away again, hoping, praying, that in some way I might be able to help you. Pascal is just behind; we thought it less noticeable to travel thus, and I whistled to let him know all was well."

"My brave darling!" I cried.

"Mademoiselle, I shall never forget your thought of me," exclaimed Ramon with passionate earnestness.

Pascal, Dr. Nelson's old servant, who it seems had accompanied Jacquette in all her wanderings, now came up. He carried a stout club and at sight of us sprang forward ready to cudgel us for crossing the path of his lady.

"Pascal, do you not see? These are the friends of whom we have come in search. Let us make haste now to Madame St. Germain's," directed Jacquette, alert and resourceful once more. "But you are hurt, Nial. Lean upon my shoulder."

Instead, I took her arm and hobbled a few steps, but it was evident that if I could not proceed faster there was small hope for me, or for Ramon if he persisted in his refusal to leave me.

"M'sieur must get upon my back and I will carry him," declared Pascal.

I laughed at this and, of course, would not hear of it. With his help and Ramon's I managed to do better presently, and Jacquette led the way for over a mile.

At last we paused before a house in the suburb of St. Roch. A light was burning in an upper room facing the road. Picking up a pebble, Pascal threw it at the window from which the rays of the lamp shone. It was opened cautiously, and a woman's voice asked in a low tone, "Who is there?"

"It is I, madame," said the old servant. "I have brought the gentlemen to whom madame's nephew offered hospitality."

We heard an exclamation of surprise, a hurried call to some one in the house, and, after the delay of a few minutes, a quick tread upon the stairs. In another second the house door was thrown wide open.

"A hundred thousand welcomes," cried out young Droulet, as he drew Rycerski into the hall, and, anon, seeing my plight, turned to assist me.

Scarcely had we crossed the door-stone when Jacquette disappeared. In her flight she must have encountered Madame St. Germain, for I heard the same voice that had spoken from the window exclaim in horrified dismay at the escapade of mademoiselle, and add a few words of chiding. Then the voice spoke again in a relenting tone, and I knew my darling had won in the hasty argument.

Presently, Madame St. Germain appeared herself, to greet us, which she did most heartily. I observed that she had grown much older since the days at St. Denis. After the destruction of her

house, she had been glad to leave the place. When Jacquette came back, the demoiselle was most demurely gowned in some dark-colored stuff.

"Sweetheart, I have not yet thanked you for the help you have given us to-night," I said. "But for you we would scarce have found this refuge." Folding her in my arms, I kissed her again and again. For the nonce I even forgot Ramon.

Jacquette now turned to him and pressed his hands warmly, looking up into his face in a manner that would have made me madly jealous were he not my best-loved comrade, and had she not already shown me that I possessed her heart.

"Ah, my dear friend," she said to him, "daily have I thought of you, schemed to set you at liberty, and prayed for you, even as I have for Nial. Had you not escaped with him my happiness would not have been complete."

For once Ramon's self-possession forsook him. He could find no words to speak to her, but stood gazing into her eyes. At last, however, but still mutely, he raised her hands to his lips.

"Ah, ha, my dears, this is no time for love-making," cried Madame St. Germain, bustling in with a tray. Her misunderstanding of the situation caused him to turn away abruptly; Jacquette blushed in confusion, and I could not but laugh.

"Sir, I beg of you, do not give any more time to us," I said to Droulet, "but go at once, I entreat you, to the palace garden, where you will find our two men, who are hiding there. Take them to a place of safety."

"I will go with Monsieur Droulet," said Ramon, who now, for some inexplicable reason, seemed eager to get away.

"If you wish to go with me as far as Antoine Beaufait's, sir, well and good," answered Droulet, "you will be perhaps safer there than here."

"It is not of that I am thinking," said my comrade, "but perhaps I may be of some service to the men."

After we had taken a draught of the spirits our host urged upon us, and had done justice to the sandwiches made by our kind hostess, Ramon and Droulet set out. When they were gone, Madame St. Germain insisted upon putting a compress of linen on my injured foot and bandaging it. Jacquette hovered near, the while, rendering any assistance in her power.

The ladies wished me to go to rest in Droulet's room. As I would not hear of this, they sat with me in the parlor, Jacquette in a chair beside me, and listened with breathless interest while I related to them the details of our escape. When it was nearly daylight, Droulet came back but without my comrade.

"Captain Rycerski was rash enough to want to go straight to the garden in search of the others," he said. "But I vowed I would not seek them at all, unless he agreed to remain at Beaufait's. Going into the town alone, I searched for them in vain. Nor could I bring the captain back here. Indeed, Major Adair, much as we should like to keep you with us, I fear, for your own safety, we must send you on. My gig is ready, I will drive you out to a farmhouse farther off in the country, and there you may lie concealed for a day or two."

"Why, Major Adair is disabled; he must rest," protested Madame St. Germain.

Jacquette said nothing but looked at me with affrighted eyes.

"Madame, if he remains here he is like to rest in the citadel again before many hours," said Droulet, laconically.

"Let us go at once," I urged, starting up.

"Yes, go, Nial," begged Jacquette. "Hasten on with all possible speed. My heart will not be at peace until I hear that you have crossed the border."

I put my arms around her, kissed her passionately again and, having made my adieus to Madame St. Germain and thanked her for her kindness, went, walking with difficulty, out into the night once more.

After a drive of an hour with my friend, we stopped the horse at a farm among the hills. The farmer had just gone out to his barn in the early light to feed his cattle and ponies. Monsieur Droulet briefly told him who I was and he agreed to keep me in hiding. Here the young man left me. As he drove away I noticed with satisfaction that the light snow which was beginning to fall would soon cover all tracks of his carriage wheels. There would be no means of tracing me to this retreat. Half an hour later I was sleeping soundly amid the fragrant new hay in the mow. The next day the farmer brought me food. In the afternoon M. Droulet returned to give me the news.

"*Ma foi*, but there has been a to-do over your escape, Major Adair," he said. "The commandant, Sir James Macdonald, raved like a madman when it was reported to him. He says the *de'il* may take care of the Yankee prisoners; he has had enough of you. But, for the disgrace brought upon him, every man whose negligence abetted the carrying out of

your plot shall sup sorrow. The whole garrison is under arms, the town gates are trebly guarded, sentinels are posted in every street, alley, and lane with orders to permit no one to pass without being examined. The houses of the French are being searched, and many people have been hurried to the guard-house, Pascal among the rest. His ignorance of English was declared by the watch to be 'a d—suspicious circumstance.' ”

“Have you heard anything of my companions?” I inquired anxiously.

Droulet hesitated, but seeing that I would not be put off, finally answered, “Captain Rycerski is still at liberty, but the others have been retaken.”

“My God!” I broke out. “Where?”

“Hull in a tavern where he went to get food and drink for himself and Culver who, disabled, was hiding in a patriot’s house. The landlord suspected Hull and went out to warn the soldiers. A servant-maid tried to aid our friend. Unluckily ere he got off a party of soldiers came in and recognized him. He was immediately handcuffed and led back to the garrison under a guard of at least a hundred men. Of course he denied all knowledge of the whereabouts of any of you, but Culver was soon found and returned to prison also.”

“Poor, poor fellows,” I sighed. “Well, what has happened to them may be our fate before long. What reward is offered for the capture of Rycerski and myself?”

“The regiment has offered a thousand pounds and Lord Durham five hundred,” answered Droulet, reluctantly. “It was one of the men whom you met in the street who betrayed you. He pretends that but for the lady’s pleading he would not have let

you go. The soldiers have even forced their way into the convents to search for you, and they would have it that a middle-aged, masculine-looking sister was yourself in disguise."

"Ho, ho, ho! to think of any one expecting to find my face under a nun's hood," I laughed. "But what is to be done now?"

"Remain quiet for the day, major, since your foot is so much worse. To-night we shall try to take you off in a boat."

Early in the evening Droulet came once more, bringing a French doctor, who bathed my injured ankle, rubbed it with a liniment which, he maintained, possessed marvellous curative power, and bandaged it again. Then they helped me to a carriage and we started for the Beauport shore. The roads being all guarded, we had to take a round-about route. Through the fields and woods and over sloughs we went, following by-roads perhaps never before traversed by so light a vehicle as a gig. After much trouble and several breakdowns, we reached the strand at the point agreed upon, namely, near the house of the curé. But alack, here, where we expected to find the boat, there was neither friend nor skiff to meet us.

"Some accident must have happened," declared Droulet in distress. "The boat was here this morning; the troops must have taken it."

Leaving me with the doctor, he posted off to ascertain if the boatmen were anywhere about the village. He was gone an hour, and on his return admitted sadly that he could learn nothing of them. We must go back, but how? The way by which we had come was so bad that we could not hope to reach the farm again before daylight. We began to meet

people on the road going to market with the produce of their gardens and farms. To avoid them, we turned into the woods. Here we reached the climax of our difficulties. The axletree of the carriage broke down.

"There is no help for it," said Droulet, "we must ask shelter from M. Gudbout, who lives near here. He is a magistrate, but he will not be so inhuman as to turn a sick man from his door, nor so base as to betray one who has lost all in an effort to help his countrymen."

The young man and the doctor drew the gig farther into the wood, unharnessed the horse, and mounted me upon his back. Then we started once more, they walking beside me.

How my weary limbs and aching ankle were tortured by the ride on that hard-trotting steed! Dressed as a French Canadian in a blue surtout and toque, a woollen sash and deerskin moccasins, with my face slightly browned by walnut juice, I was a faithful picture of "*un bon habitant*."

When we came to the place, the doctor waited in the road while Droulet and I turned in at the gate leading to Gudbout's house. My friend's knock brought to the door a short, pompous, stout little man, Gudbout himself. Taking him aside, Droulet told him who I was and what we wanted.

"What! Shelter an escaped prisoner in my house!" exclaimed the magistrate in a trepidation that I should have found laughable under other circumstances. "My oath of office forbids; it would be against my honor, and, what have we, monsieur, so dear as honor? Still, I will tell you what I will do," he went on, darting a keen glance at me. "About a mile back in the woods there is a hut which is used

only in the spring at the time of the sugar boiling. No one ever goes that way. Your friend will be entirely safe there and may stay as long as he pleases. Stay, I will give you a loaf of bread for him."

While he was gone I begged the others to obtain from him minute directions how to get to the sugar camp. Presently he reappeared, bringing a large loaf which he handed to Droulet.

"Go now," he said. "Take the path through the woods, the one yonder by the big maple. "*Ciel, messieurs, go!*"

Opening my lips for the first time during the interview, I thanked him profusely. We took the way he pointed out, but as soon as we got fairly into the wood again, I reined in the horse.

"*Sacré*, I see myself going to the sugar camp," I cried. "That fellow would lead the searching party straight there before noon. Gentlemen, it is now broad day. You are only compromising yourselves by coming with me. You would better go back to the city. I can shift for myself. The magistrate's loaf may not be very palatable, but it will keep me from hunger, and any ditch will supply me with water. I will remain hereabouts all day and come out by the house of the curé to-night again. Perhaps by that time you will be able to get a boat to take me across to the Ile d'Orleans."

The doctor, after some demur, went back, taking his horse with him, but Droulet would not leave me. Eager to get me away from the neighborhood, he hailed a market cart and offered the habitant who drove it half a crown to bring us to a farm he named. Between them they lifted me into the cart.

"I am taking you to friends of whom I did not

think until now," said my guide. "The man is timid, but his heart is with us. His wife is a true patriot and she will presently have half a hundred plans for keeping you safe, for the time, while I go and inquire why the boat was not at hand this morning."

When we reached the house we found that the master had gone to town on business. Madame welcomed us with great cordiality, however, gave us a substantial breakfast, and concealed me in the garret of the mansion, where, thoroughly tired out, I slept a good part of the day. Droulet returned in the afternoon with much news.

"Ha, ha!" he laughed, as we sat on a chest in the loft making ourselves as comfortable as circumstances would permit. "This morning old Gudbout went straight to the town major and told the whole story of our call upon him last night, just as you predicted he would. He even declared you were at the moment in the hut at the sugar camp and demanded that a posse of soldiers be sent out to capture you. Luckily for you though, Adair, so many stories about you are current in the city, and so many people claim to have seen you and have led the searchers on a wild-geese chase, that the old fool was not believed. I will not deny, however, that the government are vigilantly taking their own way to secure your capture. No vehicle is allowed to pass the gates without being thoroughly examined. The bakers' carts have been stopped in the streets by the guards, and all the loaves thrown out, in the hope of finding you hidden under them. Loads of hay, grain, and even of manure have been overhauled, and I myself saw a soldier thrust his bayonet into a wagon full of straw, with the design of finishing

you, if you should happen to be concealed beneath it. To cap the climax, a funeral procession slowly winding its way toward the cemetery was halted by the military, and the coffin was opened to see if, perchance, you might be trying to get away by passing yourself off as a corpse."

"Surely this was unnecessary," said I, grimly. "Had they followed the coffin and seen it duly buried they might have safely concluded I was then done for, dead or alive. But what of the boat? Can I get off to-night?"

"Our friends were here with the canoe last night, as they promised, but the tide being low they were forced to keep out from the shore. The boats of the man-of-war at anchor in the river kept cruising around, and as we did not come on time, our boatmen feared to remain waiting longer, lest thus they might cause you to be captured. To-night they will try again. When they have taken you into the canoe they will keep along the shore until they are able to elude the sentinel boats in the darkness. Then they will make straight across to the island. You will not be suspected of being in that vicinity, and once there you can remain or not as you like. They will so disguise you that you will be able to take all the exercise necessary for your health."

"How do they mean to disguise me?"

"Have you any objection to wearing a gown?"

"Decidedly. Rather than don petticoats I would almost rather be taken."

Forgetting that I was in hiding he broke into a peal of merriment, but quickly controlled his mirth.

"And how about a priest's gown?"

"That is better, though I fear I should make a sorry curé."

"You shall have a chance to play the rôle. Our men will be here at seven o'clock. Until then, au revoir."

I made ready to go, but when Droulet returned he looked exceedingly downcast.

"Our plan to get you to the Ile d'Orleans is discovered, Adair," he said dejectedly. "This neighborhood will be searched to-morrow. The only thing to be done is to boldly take you back into the town."

The project seemed the acme of rashness, yet there was no choice. Besides, for anything like "bearding the lion in his den," I was always especially ready. Danger invariably aroused in me a spirit of elation and bravado.

The young man had brought me the dress of a curé, which I now put on. At nine o'clock, stealing down from the garret, I made my adieus to my good hostess, and was assisted into the French charrette which was in readiness. Slowly we drove over the rough Beauport road and onward until we came to the little River St. Charles. Between the bridge and the Marine Hospital, Droulet reined in his pony.

"The boys ought to be here," he said, "and other friends have arranged to be crossing the bridge at this time, so as to deaden the sound of our oars."

Almost as he spoke two men emerged from the shadow of a building and came toward us. I drew my cloak tighter around me, so as to somewhat conceal my features. Droulet leaned forward.

"*Soyez prêt,*" one of the strangers said softly.

My guide breathed a sigh of relief.

"It is all right," said he.

The men, after grasping my hand in token of their

friendliness, lifted me out of the cart and carried me between them to a boat a few yards distant. They waited until by the challenge of the sentinel we knew our friends were on the bridge. Then, assured that the sound of their horses' feet and of the carriage wheels would prevent him from hearing our boat, dipping their oars with as little noise as might be, they rowed across the river. On the opposite side a man had led his horse to the water's edge as though to let him drink.

"*Soyez pret,*" he said as we approached.

"*Soyez pret,*" answered Droulet.

The men lifted me on to the horse's back.

"Take these," said my friend, thrusting a brace of pistols upon me. "I will walk ahead at some distance and you must ride after alone, until you see me stop at the door of a certain house. Rein in your horse then, also. I have arranged that you shall be sheltered there for the night."

With one of the pistols in my hand, and the other in my belt, I rode after the carriage which had just crossed the bridge, and onward along the very streets through which so rigorous a search was being made for me.

CHAPTER TWENTY-SECOND

OFF FOR THE BORDER

IT was nearly morning when we stopped at a house in the St. John suburb. Here we found a supper prepared, and much kindness, but just as we were sitting down to the meal a messenger, who proved to be none other than Pascal, came running in.

"It is not safe for m'sieur to remain here," he cried in French. "The soldiers have been through the Faubourg St. Roch and on the Côte Ste. Genevieve. As I came along I saw a band of them overturning the flower-pots in the window of an old bourgeoisie near here. They thought m'sieur might be under them, I suppose," added the old fellow with a grin. "But the woman valiantly defended her posies with a broomstick and, by Ste. Anne, I'll wager more than one clown got a broken head."

Further inquiry led us to the discovery that a party were searching the houses in the very street where we had taken refuge.

The cart had been brought around over the bridge, and Pascal now contrived to get it to the door at the rear of the house. Having been lifted into it, I drove away, Madame St. Germain's nephew going on afoot as previously.

In my character of curé, I proceeded slowly once more, following my conductor through many lanes and by-ways. Thus more than an hour passed. I was tardy in realizing that there was a reason for these many detours besides the necessity of avoid-

ing the searching party. At last, however, the truth dawned upon me. Droulet did not know where to take me. He dared not venture to ask any one to harbor me; and yet, brave and true friend that he was, he would not desert me.

The sun had risen two hours before, and my hunger, sharpened by the fact that we had been forced to go supperless, told me it was breakfast time. Driving a little faster I caught up with Droulet and told him the plan that occurred to me.

"I will go to Devereux," I said. "Although a government official he is a countryman of mine and he will not give me up."

My friend protested; but I was resolved, and he finally agreed to take me to the house, since nothing else offered. We soon came to it. With difficulty I got down from the cart and he took my place therein.

"If you will come for me to-night, most faithful of friends, perhaps I can get away," I said.

He promised, and after nodding an *au revoir* to him, I limped around a corner of the residence of the man into whose keeping I was about to entrust my life. Climbing the steps of a veranda I found myself before a door. Should I knock? No, that would be too great a risk. The servant who might respond to the summons might suspect who I was and give the alarm. Or perhaps a poor country curé would be denied an interview with the master. Turning the knob, I pushed open the door and walked into the hall. As I stood for a second, undecided which way to turn, the sound of a girl's gay voice floated out from the room beyond, and presently a man's rich baritone answered in a bantering fashion.

"Come well, come ill, here goes," I said to myself, and striding forward, I entered the parlor.

Here at breakfast were seated a middle-aged man, a handsome matron, and two young ladies, one of them a pretty little maid in her early teens. For a moment the party were unconscious of my intrusion. If any one among them heard the noise of the opening of the door, it was evidently supposed to have been made by the servant who waited upon them.

The older girl, whose merry laugh had been my guide, was seated facing the hall, and therefore was the first to catch sight of me, as she turned her bright eyes from the master of the house, who had evidently been playfully teasing her. When her glance fell on me she started in alarm, and I in turn stared at her in incredulous astonishment; for this lady whom I encountered thus so unexpectedly was Phœbe Foster. The sweet English girl, who had twice already befriended me, now quickly recovered her self-possession.

"Mr. Devereux, here is a French curé who apparently wishes to speak to you," she said.

Devereux turned abruptly and, perceiving me, said to the other girl, whom I recognized by her resemblance to him to be his daughter, "Aileen, since you are our French scholar, tell the good man to come to my office later. Or if he is collecting for a church or a hospice, I'll give him a dollar and let him go."

Rising from her place, Aileen came toward me and repeated in French what he had said.

"Thank you, mademoiselle," I replied in the same language. "Money I have managed for several days to do without, but I am sadly in need of food and shelter."

Then approaching her father I added resolutely in English, "Sir, as a countryman of yours I come to you for aid, trusting in your honor. I am a proscribed and hunted man; my name is Nial Adair."

Before he could answer Phœbe turned to her host. "Oh, Mr. Devereux, you will protect him?" she cried eagerly. "I have — met Mr. Adair before."

Aileen, meanwhile, hastened to set a chair for me.

"Sir, be seated," she said with pretty dignity, "we bid you welcome if my father does not."

Devereux, aroused from his blank astonishment by her independence, leaned back in his chair and laughed.

"Ha, ha, traitress," he protested, "do you not know this gentleman has been convicted of high treason and it is a great risk to harbor him?"

"Nevertheless, I feel sure my husband will not refuse him hospitality," interposed Mrs. Devereux, serenely.

Devereux exchanged a glance with her, rose, locked the door of the room, and wheeling about stretched out his hand to me, saying, "Sir, since you are here, you may rely on me. I cannot shut my eyes to the injustice of many of the men now prominent in affairs in the province, nor my heart to the appeal of one from my own country who needs my help. Draw nearer to the table, sir, you have not breakfasted."

Mrs. Devereux now poured coffee for me, and Aileen busied herself in waiting upon me, while Phœbe smiled in friendly content.

When I had amply testified to my appreciation of the comfortable meal, my host conducted me upstairs to a little suite of apartments kept for his own use and, pointing to a couch, said, "Mr. Adair, you

need rest. After you have slept, your luncheon will be served in the adjoining study, and my wife, my daughter, and their guest will assist you, with their chatter, to while away the afternoon. I must hasten to my affairs but I shall be at home again by six o'clock."

When he had gone I threw myself on the divan and for some hours knew the blissful unconsciousness of slumber. Awaking at last, I bathed, dressed with more neatness than I had been able to do for some days, and passing into the study took up a book in an endeavor to divert my mind from its anxieties.

Before long a pleasanter distraction presented itself. There was a light tap on the door. I opened it, and beheld pretty Aileen standing before me holding a well-laden tray. Taking it from her, I laid it upon the table. Mrs. Devereux and Phœbe now appeared also, and the three ladies set themselves to entertain me while I lunched.

Phœbe had, clearly, told her hostess and Aileen something of the circumstances of our acquaintance. I now gave them my version of the story, relating with enthusiasm and thankfulness how she had aided my escape to American soil and how, once again, she had helped me with her kindly sympathy at the Strait.

"Ah, Phœbe dear, I always knew you were a heroine," exclaimed little Miss Devereux, embracing her friend.

Later, mother and daughter slipped away for a few moments, leaving me to a tête-à-tête with their charming young visitor. It was then I learned how she happened to be in Quebec.

"My father, having finished his round of inspection of the forts, came here to make his report to

the government, and I begged him to bring me with him," Phœbe said. "He and Mr. Devereux have long been friends."

After some beating about the bush I asked for Captain Weston. The dear girl's answer was a deep blush, which led me to rally her a little on the subject of the handsome captain. She finally admitted to me, with a fascinating confusion, that she had given her troth to the worthy officer, and they planned to be married during the coming winter. Thereat I, on my part, told her of Jacquette, and my hope that before long I might claim my darling.

After this Aileen came back. She and Phœbe had been at a party on the evening of my escape from the citadel, and the lively demoiselle now described for my benefit the consternation of the young subalterns who were their dancing partners, when the flight of the Amercian prisoners became known.

The dusk of the October day was gathering when Mrs. Devereux, entering the room quickly, said, "Mr. Adair, a man is lingering about the house; I think he must be one of your friends."

"If it is some one for me, he will repeat the watchword, *soyez pret*," I answered, starting to my feet.

Aileen flitted away and soon returned accompanied by Droulet.

"I have brought you a new disguise," he said hastily addressing me. "We must be off at once."

I went into the chamber, changed my clothes, and came back, again dressed as a habitant. The ladies laughed when they saw me thus ready for my new rôle. I thanked them with profound gratitude for their goodness, expressed to Phœbe my best wishes

that she might soon be a happy bride, and begged Mrs. Devereux to tell her husband I would never forget his generosity in harboring me. Then, after entrusting to pretty Aileen a letter which she promised to deliver safe to Jacquette, I took leave of these true friends.

Straightway I again realized that I was a hunted man. For a second time was the boat in which I hoped to get away captured by the authorities. Droulet in desperation knocked at the door of a Frenchman, who took me to his stable.

"There is a hollow under the floor of the horse's stall, sir," said the habitant. "If you wish to lie concealed there you will be safe."

"Danger makes strange bedfellows. I have no choice but to try it," I replied, "since the soldiers are upon my track."

The horse was already bedded down for the night, but we took him from the stall, cleared out the straw, and raised the planks of the floor.

"There!" said my new host, pointing to a cavity like a grave.

I had no time to hesitate, for, from the door of the stable, we could hear the voices of the searchers and see the light of their lanterns. While the men fastened it, Droulet threw down a buffalo robe, and I cast myself prone in the hollow. He and the owner of the barn then replaced the boards above me, brought back the horse, and left me, for the nonce, to the solitude of my living grave.

Luckily for me the stable was built of squared logs and upon a rising ground. The earth was consequently dry. The floor was also raised about sixteen inches, and through the chinks between the logs, as well as in places where the plaster of the

foundation wall had worn away, the wind blew, making a current of air. Notwithstanding my rest at the home of Mr. Devereux, I was so fatigued by my many wanderings I found the buffalo robe comfortable enough. Feeling that my pursuers would never think to seek me beneath the floor of a horse's stall, I soon fell asleep, and rested as comfortably as though I were already across the border and had found repose upon a bed of down.

Late that night Droulet and my host came to the stable, disinterred me, and brought me into the house. As I entered the living-room I saw a habitan standing before the fire with his back to me. At the sound of my footsteps he wheeled around and came toward me with outstretched hands and a smiling face.

It was Ramon disguised, like myself. With what joy I greeted him I need not say. While we supped he told me of his many and perilous adventures since we were parted. Gladly I would set them down in these pages, but they form another story.

The night we passed in the house, but in the morning, before the children and servants of the family were awake, our host took us to the stable. We made the hollow under the floor larger, and my comrade shared with me the shallow, subterranean chamber.

Here we remained for days, being brought out at night, but returning to our tomb at dawn taking with us a loaf of bread and a bottle of water. Droulet could no longer come to speak to us in the daytime and not always at night, for a sentinel was posted at the house of Madame St. Germain, and two others were in the neighborhood. At last, he brought us word that for the third time a boat

was ready to take us across the river to Point Levis, and arrangements had been made to start us on the Kennebec road for Maine.

It was the third of November. At seven o'clock in the evening we ventured forth. Ramon still wore the blouse of a habitant, I a long overcoat and broad-brimmed hat, the costume of the priests of the seminary of St. Sulpice. I was now able to walk fairly well with the aid of a cane and, as I leaned upon my staff and upon the arm of our host, I sought to maintain the dignity of the rôle I assumed.

My comrade walked on the opposite side of the way. Several of our friends were designedly in the street to lend us their aid if necessity should arise. But, although we passed several soldiers, we reached the beach near the Queen's woodyard without adventure. There, indeed, was the boat manned by two sturdy rowers. With joy we took our places in the little craft. Gathered about a boatload of hay next to us were three carters.

"Do you know, sir, what has become of the man who owns this hay?" one of them called out to me.

"It has just changed owners and the men have gone to the auberge to drink to the bargain," I answered, pointing to a cabaret near by.

The master of our boat now stepped aboard; the boatmen shoved off, and at last we were away from Quebec. We dared not hasten, however, for we were, ostensibly, a band of habitants coming from market. We kept down the river outside the place where the men from the man-of-war were accustomed to row, and thus, under cover of the darkness, were able to land at Levis, near the little church.

Having drawn the boat on the strand our friend and the boatmen led the way up the ascent. At the

top of the height I waited while the others went to get the horses that had been ordered for us. Within a few minutes one of the party brought my horse. I mounted and, riding down the road, joined Ramon and the owner of the boat, who was to go with us for some distance.

Through all the night we rode, and at daylight arrived at a clearing in the woods. Here was a tavern almost as rude as the trappers' huts at which the *coureurs de bois* were wont to stop in the old days. The master of the inn—a smuggler whom Droulet, who was a young advocate, had once saved from imprisonment—had a meal prepared for us. The impression had been conveyed to him that we were gentlemen pecuniarily embarrassed who must get away from Canada.

Scarcely had we breakfasted when we saw a horseman riding up to the place. Ramon and I made a hasty retreat to the woods, but were presently sought out by our guide. The newcomer was Droulet, who brought us a change of disguise and money.

It had been arranged that the keeper of the auberge should conduct us to the border, but toward evening he began to make excuses, adding as a final argument that he had no horse.

"You will be back to-morrow, and you may take my pony," replied Droulet. "If you do not go with these gentlemen you may swing for it before I help you out of any difficulty with the government officers again."

Thus silenced, the smuggler agreed to go. He and Ramon and I mounted our horses. As I was securing my pistols and covering them with my cloak Droulet came up close to me and in a voice trembling with emotion, said, —

"Adair, farewell, we may never meet again. God bless you. Do not let yourself be taken. If they get you I shall be tempted to throw myself into the river."

"Oh, no, no, whatever happens, remember I shall feel to the end that you left no opportunity untried in order to help me to my freedom. No harm must come to you, my friend. But I'll be hanged, if I let them take me! *Au revoir, au revoir.*"

Ramon in turn took leave of him, and sad to part with so true a friend, we rode away. Never, indeed, did I meet Droulet again, but even now, after the lapse of many years, the very mention of his name stirs my pulses with a warmth of gratitude for the services he rendered me, and the risks he ran to save my life, during those days when I was a fugitive. This self-sacrificing generosity I appreciated all the more because, later, I learned he acted as he did not only through friendship for me, but because he loved Jacquette. Finding it vain to woo her for himself, he, with the spirit of which heroes are made, devoted all his energies to insure her happiness, even though his success would give her to a rival. Ah, there are no nobler men than this young Canadian patriot!

When we had ridden some miles our guide, the innkeeper, again essayed to go back, but I showed him the purse with which Droulet had supplied me and offered to give him two golden eagles at the end of the journey. The promise of this reward kept him silent for an hour or more. Then he again faltered.

It was now plain enough to us that he knew who we were and feared arrest if he were found conducting us. Reining in my horse, so that Ramon invol-

untarily rode ahead, I thus got between him and the tavern-keeper and, turning quickly in my saddle, levelled my pistol at the man who would have so basely deserted us.

"You will guide us to the States," I said peremptorily, with my finger on the trigger.

"Oh yes, sir, yes, yes, I will. Oh, put up your weapon, I beg of you!" he stammered in a tremor of fear. "Remember, I have a wife and family. I had no idea you were in such a desperate strait, sir. Of course I will go with you."

Wasting no words further, I motioned to him to ride before me, which he hastened to do. Pistol in hand I followed, but we had no more trouble with him.

Thus Ramon and I pressed on through the darkness, laughing in our sleeves at the guarded bridges, passes, and barricaded posts which we were able so successfully to avoid. We had journeyed about ninety miles when, on the second morning from the time we set out from Quebec, a little after dawn, our guide said, pointing to a frame building a short distance before us on the road, "You see that house, sirs?"

"Yes, what of it?" I answered carelessly.

"It is the frontier inn, and is built right on the boundary line."

As we rode up to the door he directed our attention to the signboard swinging from a post before it. On one side of this sign were painted the lion and the unicorn, and beneath them the words "Lower Canada." On the other side was an eagle with outspread wings, above him a circlet of stars, and below, in large letters, "The State of Maine."

When in this wild spot we looked upon the

emblem of our adopted country our hearts leaped with joy, and we cheered so lustily that the guests of the tavern must have been startled from their slumbers. Putting spurs to our horses, we galloped on.

Half an hour earlier we had been so fatigued we could hardly sit erect in our saddles. Now we were so jubilant at being at last upon American soil we could have cantered on for half the forenoon. Several miles farther ahead, however, we came to a long, low loghouse.

"The people here will provide you with refreshments and you can rest if you choose," said our guide.

I paid him the gold pieces and thanked him for his trouble, although he had served us sullenly. The clink of the coins restored his good-humor.

"Well, sirs, you are all right now," he cried. "Good-day and good luck to you." He then rode back, but I heard afterwards that poor Droulet never got his horse again.

When we entered the house we found an elderly man, two young fellows, whom we rightly took to be his sons, and his wife, who was preparing breakfast.

"You are from Quebec?" asked the father as he invited us to take our places at the pine table.

"Yes," I said tersely.

"Perhaps," put in one of the boys, "you can tell us something of the American prisoners who so boldly escaped from the citadel. Were they captured?"

"They were still at liberty when we left Quebec on Saturday," declared my comrade.

"God be praised!" exclaimed the mother, pausing in her work of frying griddle-cakes over the fire.

"May He guard and lead them out of danger."

"They are friends of yours, madame?" I asked with a smile.

"No, sir, I never saw them," she answered; "but I hope they will not try to come to the States by this road."

"Why, would they not be safe if they were here, for instance?"

"As safe as three good rifles could make them," interrupted the younger of the boys with enthusiasm. "My mother means they could hardly get here, the roads are so closely guarded."

"Do you know where they are, sir?" queried the old man.

"They are now in the State of Maine," announced Ramon.

The woman raised her eyes to heaven and murmured a prayer of thankfulness.

"Did they cross at Houlton?" inquired the older son.

"No, below; quite near here," said I; "in fact, this gentleman and I are the men for whom the whole province has been searching."

The mother threw up her hands with an exclamation of astonishment; the boys cast their arms about us, the father shook us by the hands. All of this good family appeared as happy over our deliverance as though we were their friends and neighbors. Never have I had a better breakfast than the meal the kind woman presently set before us. Never have I rested so peacefully as we did during all the first day that we were again really free.

CHAPTER TWENTY-THIRD

A DAUNTLESS DEMOISELLE

A HEAVY snowstorm accompanied by a high wind set in that day; even had we been in a condition to proceed, travel would have been difficult. So fatigued were we, however, we thought it better to rest and take our horses no farther. A coach carrying the northern mail was to arrive in the evening, continue to the lines, and returning to the tavern where we were, go south in the morning. Ramon and I decided to take seats in the coach and hasten to Augusta. While we slept our host and his sons watched, fearing that since we were so near the border, posses of soldiers might venture across and capture us.

In the course of the afternoon, from our window of an upper room, I saw two men on foot approaching the house. As they drew near I saw from their dress and features that they were French Canadians. Going down to the door, I hailed them.

"*Bon jour, mes amis*, are you bound for the next village?"

"We are laborers," answered the older of them, "and having spent the summer hereabouts are going to our homes in Canada for the winter."

"We have just come from there and wish to send back our horses," said I. "You are good honest fellows, I know. If you will agree to deliver the animals as I tell you, we will let you ride them home. This will be better for you than trudging

along on foot, *n'est-ce pas?* But we cannot let you start until night. The horses must be well rested."

"*N'importe*, we will stay," said the other man, nothing loth to take shelter during the storm.

So far no one had passed who could carry to the lines the news of where we were. Late in the evening the coach stopped on its northern trip. Owing probably to the bad weather, there were no passengers. The household had retired with the exception of one of the boys, who had waited for the stage, and myself. The two Canadians lay asleep on the floor of the bar. Before the driver entered, on the impulse of the moment, I caught up the capote and toque of one of these men and put them on. Still smoking my short black pipe, I seated myself in the chimney-corner. After some conversation between the driver and the young man the latter said, pointing to me, "This Canadian here talks of riding to the lines."

"*Oui, oui*," I chimed in. "How much you ax, *mon ami*, 'spose you take me to Canada?"

"The fare is half a dollar, replied the driver."

"*Misericorde, c'est trop!* And it is a dark night. I stay here till to-morrow."

"For the sake of having company I will take you for a quarter, if you 'll stand the liquor at the tavern," he urged liberally.

"No, I tank you. I guess I not go."

"Never mind him," chuckled the borderer. "I 'll ride over with you, just for the lark, since you will be here again so soon."

Three hours later, when the coach came back, the young man drew me aside and said in high glee, "Oh, sir, the tavern at the lines was crowded with soldiers from Quebec and tories of the neighborhood.

They must have found some trace of you, for when we went in they gathered around the driver and asked him if he had seen two men on horseback armed and wearing military caps and cloaks. He shook his head and answered that he had met no such men. Then they turned to me. I told him two travellers of the description had breakfasted with us this forenoon, but from the direction they took afterwards they must be near Moose village by this time. Ha, ha, Moose village is a good twenty miles from here, sir. If they thought you were so near, I am afraid they would have swooped down on you."

In the morning Ramon and I paid our friends well for their service and took our places on the coach. The evening of the second day afterwards we reached Augusta. When we were settled in lodgings here I wrote to Jacquette. Though I would gladly go to the ends of the earth to claim her as my bride, since she had done her best to get me out of Canada, I begged she would follow me, or for her sake I might be rash enough to return.

"Under the care of old Pascal, and with your maid for company, you can easily travel to Augusta, dear one," I continued, "and here we will be married. The war and my long imprisonment have indeed played havoc with my fortunes, but there is still a small sum of money well placed to my credit in the States, and this will enable me to take care of you until I find occupation. Is not even the cheerless journey at this season better, my darling, than that we should be still separated? The patriots have not yet abandoned their cause as hopeless. If the troubles break out anew, we may be parted forever."

How eagerly I awaited a reply! Day after day

passed, and the uncertainty seemed to eat my heart out. During this interval of suspense, when I was often moody and despairing, Ramon gave me his companionship with a patience I did not half appreciate.

At last my faith and trust in my love were rewarded. The mail brought me a letter from Jacquette, and glad news — *she was coming*. When I told my comrade that, wanderer though I was, my life was to be crowned with happiness, he grasped my hand with all the ardor of his brotherly affection and wished for my darling and me a future as joyous as our wedding day. From this time, however, he grew restless. Heigh-ho, only a lover can wait with equanimity upon the humors of a pretty woman! I might, it is true, beguile the hours by building castles in Spain; but what was there to interest Ramon in this little river-city, far from the stirring scenes toward which his thoughts hastened?

I was not altogether surprised when after the receipt of sundry letters, he announced that he must set off at once for northern New York, where the patriot refugees and their friends were again secretly arming. The next day he was a passenger on the coach bound for Boston, the first objective point of his new wanderings alone.

"A soldier does not halt long, even to marry," I said, in taking leave of him. "Apply for a command for me too, comrade, I shall soon join you. Jacquette will not want me to dangle about her when there is work yet to do for the cause she loves."

"Au revoir, then," he replied. "Ah, Nial, I shall not forget that to you I owe the joy of liberty. But for your help, ingenuity, and courage I should never have escaped from Quebec." Thus we parted

as friends part when they expect soon to meet again.

After Ramon was gone I spent most of my time in loitering around the station waiting for the Canadian coach. It arrived late one afternoon, and as I stood at a little distance, fearing the disappointment of hope deferred, yet eager to see if it might have brought the most precious passenger (to my mind) it would ever have the good fortune to carry, a woman was assisted by the guard to alight.

I took a step forward. Pshaw! She was stout and, I judged from her figure, mature and wore a bright green veil wrapped about her bonnet. Yet she had the air of a lady and could not be Jacquette's maid; neither was there any sign of Pascal. Jacquette had not come. I drew back with a sinking heart. Oh, why did she delay?

The inside passenger had a great number of band-boxes and packages. Impatient at seeing them lifted out, I was about to turn away when I caught sight of a little gloved hand thrust out of the window of the coach. In another moment a trim foot shod in a fur boot was on the step and a younger woman sprang out of the creaking old vehicle. Enveloped in a coat of squirrel skins, by comparison with her companion she appeared slight and girlish, and though her face was hidden by her pretty fur hood, I knew the stranger could be none other than my darling.

"Jacquette!" I cried, springing forward.

"Nial," came the sweet answer from the depths of the hood.

Clasping her hands in mine I drew her into the little parlor of the coaching inn, and her companion followed us. Once out of the range of the curious eyes of the bystanders, gathered to witness the

arrival of the coach, I folded my darling in my arms, greatcoat, hood, and all.

"Nial, do you want to smother me?" cried Jacquette, with her old, gay laugh.

Thus warned, I desisted, while she took off her wraps. But when she stood before me, rosy and smiling in her soft-tinted gray gown, I claimed another kiss.

"Enough, sir," she protested in a tone of mock reproach. "All this time you have not noticed the friend but for whose kindness in accompanying me I should not be here."

Turning to her chaperon, who was still endeavoring to free herself from the many windings of the green veil, I recognized the good-humored countenance that beamed upon me like a sun emerging from the shadow after an eclipse.

"Madame St. Germain!" I exclaimed. "Truly, madame, I shall never cease to be grateful for your kindness."

"*Ma foi*, but Jacquette is a wilful demoiselle, and glad enough I shall be to resign my care of her to you, monsieur, to-morrow," averred Madame St. Germain, with a shrug of her ample shoulders.

Jacquette blushed rosier, and hastened to change the conversation.

When the ladies had supped, having made sure that the landlord of the inn had done everything possible for their comfort, I went back to the lodgings Ramon and I had shared together.

The next morning, at the little French Canadian church of the town, Jacquette and I were married, in the presence of Madame St. Germain and a few prominent people of the town whose acquaintance I had made.

As we stood before the altar I thought of good Dr. Nelson and wished he could have been there and, I venture to say, Jacquette did also. Though there was no one to give the bride away, we were happy in knowing this was no made marriage, but the blessing of God upon our love, the sacred tie that bound our hearts and lives together for all time. And, in spite of the dangers and sorrows through which we had passed, notwithstanding the absence of friends whom we would fain have had with us, our little wedding breakfast was as gay as any I have ever attended.

In the middle of the forenoon Madame St. Germain took leave of us, after having favored me, as well as Jacquette, with a maternal embrace. We saw her comfortably started on her northern route and, two hours later, my wife and I took the coach for the metropolis of New England, through which we were to pass on our way to New York City.

Ours was a strange wedding journey. In many towns through which we went the people, having heard of us, welcomed us with congratulations upon my marvellous escape from the citadel of Quebec, and admiration of my darling's loyalty to me and her efforts to help the imprisoned patriots.

At New York we received an ovation. William Lyon Mackenzie, who had sought refuge in the States, now edited a newspaper here. Still the leader of "the cause," he assigned to me the task of putting it before the people of this great city in a series of addresses.

This occasioned a delay of several weeks before I could carry out my own plans, but I consoled myself with the knowledge that no further steps had been taken by the patriots.

Friends claimed a visit from Jacquette, and it was at last arranged that I should leave her with them and proceed to Odgensburg, the border town in whose vicinity the Canadians and their allies were again quietly gathering.

Meanwhile we were staying at Fraunces' Tavern, at a corner of Broad and Pearl Streets, — an old hostelry built of brick brought from Amsterdam in the Knickerbocker times, — where I chose to lodge because of its many interesting associations with the beginning of the Republic. The day before I was to start for the frontier, Mr. Mackenzie came to lunch with us.

CHAPTER TWENTY-FOURTH

TRIED AND TRUE

WHILE we lingered at the table, in the very room on the second floor, where, more than once, the great Washington dined with his friends, I, who was seated opposite to a window, saw a man on horse-back ride clattering up the street. He drew rein at the door of the house, sprang from the saddle, and leaving his mount to the care of a stable boy, entered the bar.

“An express! an express!”

The cry caused us to start to our feet, and almost at the same moment the messenger, having run up the stairs, pushed his way into the room. Surely I had seen this black-haired, dark-skinned little man before now.

“Toussaint,” I exclaimed, calling him by name.

He stared at me for a second, then caught and wrung my hand in delight.

“Major Adair,” he stammered, with tears of emotion. “Ah, even the lightning cloud of war sometimes a silver lining shows. It was said I might find m’sieur here. Louisonne, Louison, and the wives and children of all who uphold the cause have prayed for him.”

At the entrance of the express, Jacquette had slipped away to her own little drawing-room.

“Thank your good Louisonne and the boy for me, Toussaint,” I now said. “Do you bring word from

the St. Lawrence ? Am I so unfortunate as to have missed the first skirmish of the new campaign ? ”

“ That is as m’sieur views it,” Terault replied grimly. “ If he still finds life sweet, he will be consoled that he was not called upon to lay it down.

“ This is my news, m’sieur,” he continued in French. “ A party of volunteers commanded by Colonel Von Shultz were landed by two schooners near the Canadian town of Prescott. The leader of the expedition, one General Birge, was to return with reinforcements from Ogdensburg and a good supply of ammunition and provisions. But he lost courage and the ships were captured by the United States revenue officers, in accordance with the proclamation of neutrality. Abandoned by his chief, and deserted also by many of his followers, Von Shultz took possession of a stone windmill. With a force of less than two hundred, three times he drove the British troops back to their garrison, at Fort Wellington, and for three days defied their bomb-throwing ships in the river. Despairing of aid, he yet begged his men not to yield, reminding them that death would be better than a hopeless captivity. Driven from the mill at last, the intrepid little band took refuge in the bush. They had respected the enemy’s flag of truce and permitted them to take their wounded from the skirmish field, but now, when the exhausted volunteers sent out a white flag, its bearer was shot down, and directly they were captured. Birge was to have brought muskets and powder to the Canadian sympathizers with the cause. As it turned out, the patriots, being without arms, could do nothing to help the friends who fought in their behalf. ”

Mackenzie, without waiting to hear more, thrust into my hand a packet that had been inclosed in one

Terault had delivered to him, and rushed away to despatch letters hither and thither in a frenzied effort to save the gallant young Polish aristocrat from the consequences of the treachery of others and his generous adherence to a cause not his own. Noble Von Shultz! Truly he was a hero whose memory should be wreathed with laurels.

But not alone for him was I concerned. It was to join fortunes with this brave officer, his compatriot, that Ramon had gone to the front.

"Toussaint," I cried, "what of Captain Rycerski? Alas, is he again a prisoner and menaced by the fate that hangs like the sword of Damocles above the head of his countryman?"

The messenger drew a hand across his eyes.

"M'sieur need have no fear for *m'sieur le capitaine*," said the good fellow. "He sleeps as a soldier wishes to rest at last, upon the field where he fought. A letter addressed to m'sieur was found upon his breast. It is in the packet."

I turned away. In my first grief I did not want even Jacquette's sweet sympathy to come between me and the friend I loved, at our last comrades' tryst. For such would seem the moment when I should read his farewell message, commune directly for the last time with this brave spirit, my other self, whom I thought I knew as I knew my own heart, — Ramon, the embodiment of the ideal of chivalry, manly generosity, and honor that I strove to reach in my own life.

Nor could I read his letter anywhere within walls; the room where I was, the house, would have seemed about to close in upon me. Surely, out under the boundless sky, to which we so often looked up together, in the days when we were care free, in the

bondage we shared, and later in our bold dash for liberty, in God's out-of-doors, where the air stirs the pulses and the joy of living is keenest, would not Ramon's deathless spirit be with me still?

Going out, I walked to Broadway and involuntarily turned my steps toward the beautiful promenade of the Battery. But no, its paths would be thronged with fine ladies and gentlemen strolling aimlessly. Wheeling about, I plunged onward in the opposite direction, passed the busy little row of newspaper offices at the southern end of the City Hall Park, where the people several times set up their Liberty Pole before the Revolution, and continued northward.

In those days lower Broadway was already a crowded business thoroughfare, where the passenger omnibuses were so numerous one could almost have walked on the roofs of them from the American Museum to Bowling Green. Then, among the sights on the thronged pavement, street venders were much in evidence. Some of them bore trays laden with baked pears swimming in molasses; others sold hulled corn. Men with two-wheeled carts dealt in the white sand used for kitchen and tap-room floors; there were darkies with bundles of straw, an old man cried "door-mats woven of tar-rope," and an enterprising lad peddled pure spring water at two cents a bucket. These things I saw in a dazed way, without being conscious of them.

A short distance above "the Canal" the noise and confusion of the city's commerce, as well as the cries of the itinerant peddlers, were left behind. From here on, the Way was bordered by tall trees, that must have given it a lovely aspect in the summer time, and lined by handsome mansions. Mr. Mackenzie had told me the vacant lot at Bleeker Street was a great

blackberry patch for the boys, and beautiful were the roses that during June clambered up to the windows of a stone house near by.

Giving small heed to my surroundings, however, I continued past Astor Place to the old powder-house in the Square, and beyond it to the Madison Common and the Boston Post Road at its eastern boundary. Thenceforth, as I walked on, I was in the open country, a region of farms and farmhouses, beyond which I wandered over hills and little dells until I came to the old Bridge where, in former times, when a gallant rode out from the town with his sweetheart on the pillion behind him, he might claim a kiss from his pretty companion.

Pausing at last, I seated myself on the stone parapet. Once I had come here with Jacquette when the day was bright, when the tones of the landscape were pale gold and violet, and the broad waters of the river were a gleaming azure stream. Now the afternoon was dreary even for the first week in December. The clouds were lowering and heavy with snow, the fields bleak and brown; the neighboring woods, leafless and spectral, seemed an army of gray ghosts. The brook, that in summer flowed beneath the bridge and went babbling down to the East River, was frozen fast, the distant current itself was a cold, leaden-colored flood. But the present environment was in keeping with my mood.

From my coat I drew out the packet. Tearing off the outer wrapper, I discovered it had been sent by none other than Captain Weston. Being in command of a party of British who went over the field near the windmill seeking their wounded, he had come upon Count Rycerski, dead, with the letter in the breast of his surtout.

The note of the English officer ended with a kind message from Phœbe, now his wife. Gentle Phœbe had been, indeed, unable to fulfil the promise she once gave me to aid my friend if as a captive or a fugitive he should again cross her path. Yet it was her husband, once Ramon's prisoner at St. Denis, who had found him, fallen, but unconquered, upon the field of honor.

Evidently my comrade had written his brave *au revoir* to me a day or two before he set out on the expedition that proved so disastrous for himself, his noble leader, and the valiant men who followed them. The missive was crumpled and defaced, but it was the second seal upon it that dimmed my eyes with tears, the crimson seal of the bullet that only too surely found the valiant heart of the writer of the letter and sent the heroic soul to answer in the roll-call of the God of Armies.

When, at length, I pulled myself together sufficiently to break the waxen impress of the proud crest I knew so well, I think it not unmanly to admit that my hands trembled as I unfolded the paper, nor that I was still more unnerved when something inclosed fell to the ground.

Stooping hastily, I caught it up. It was a bit of blue ribbon, a keepsake plainly, and now upon it, as upon the letter, there was a spot of crimson. At first, dazed and uncomprehending, I stared at the bright bit of silk. If this was a love token, why had my comrade sent it to me with his dying farewell? Did he wish me to forward the news to some woman who loved him? If so, God help her when she should receive back the gage of her love.

The pretty trifle clung to my fingers like the clasp of a shadowy hand. All at once, as I gazed upon it,

I had a curious sense of having seen it before. Then, suddenly, a recollection flashed upon me. I saw again a wide harvest field upon the banks of a clear river with a background of woods in the golden and scarlet glory of their autumnal foliage, a great assemblage of people listening spellbound to a gifted orator, and anon, marching around a liberty pole, a royally crowned maple from the forest. I saw two ardent young men swearing fealty to a now lost cause and vowing everlasting friendship. Again, as these comrades passed beneath a lady's balcony, I saw a beautiful girl smile at one, and loosing the knot of ribbon from her neck, throw it down to the other.

Yes, this was it — the blue ribbon that, on the day of the huskings at St. Charles, Jacquette, in a spirit of girlish mischief, tossed to Ramon. Why had he treasured the gay gewgaw? Why did he want me to have it? Or — the sword with which grief thrust at my heart seemed pressed closer — was it to Jacquette he had sent back the token?

In these few moments I had forgotten the letter. But now, putting the ribbon back into my coat, I set myself to read the last words of the man who was to me more than a brother. They were words of generous affection, and showed his thoughts were of me and not of himself, even though he was on the eve of an undertaking that he could not but feel to be extremely hazardous. The closely written pages seemed to reflect the glow and animation with which they were penned. As I read on, my heart thrilled, as sometimes it had been wont to do at the handclasp of this best loved friend. They were for myself alone. But to the part of the letter that had to do with the blue ribbon I will refer again.

Making my way back to the hotel, I found Jacquette

in our little parlor. She was white as a ghost as she crossed the room to meet me.

"Oh Nial, Mr. Mackenzie has told me all," she said, with a sob. "Dear Nial, what shall I say to comfort you?"

I bent my head, kissed her sweet mouth, and with my arm about her, led her to a chair.

"Jacquette, you have *not* heard all," I began. "But first, tell me, was there ever any love between you and Ramon? I once fancied you cared for him."

She drew away from me, and her voice was cold as she replied, "No. Ramon never spoke of love to me." And then, enlightened by a flash of intelligence and as if probing my very heart, she added, "Do you doubt the dead, Nial?"

"Heaven help me, I would if he were any other," I cried passionately. "Yet I would not be less generous than he who is gone. Do you remember this?"

As I spoke I put the little keepsake into her hand.

"My ribbon," she exclaimed incredulously, after having scrutinized it a moment, and tears glistened upon her long lashes as she noted its glorious broidery of crimson. "Yes, yes, I recall the day in the meadow at St. Charles when you and he came marching down from the liberty pole past the gallery of the farmhouse. Ah, Nial, was not that a happy day for us three?"

"It was a fateful one, assuredly," I rejoined; "for on that day, *mignonne*, you stole away both my comrade's heart and mine."

A startled expression crept into her eyes.

"No, no, not Ramon's," she protested with the artlessness of a child.

"Yes, Ramon's; so this, his last letter, acknowledges to me. Blind as I was, and absorbed in my

own love; strong as was the sympathy between us, I never surmised the truth. I owe it to him that you should know."

Unfolding the letter I read aloud the paragraph that had been so great a surprise to me.

"Nial, you will never see this letter until after I have passed beyond the picket line of the stars. Therefore I will tell you in it the only secret I have ever kept from you since we pledged our friendship. To you I send the knot of ribbon. I have worn it next my heart since the day of the meeting at the Richelieu. From the moment I first saw her, I have loved the beautiful girl who, with gay coquetry, cast it at my feet. But you loved her, too. Who, watching her as we did, during those stirring days at St. Denis would not? Had she given me her love, I must indeed have stayed; her soul crying out to mine would have claimed my first allegiance. But since she was still fancy free, I went away, leaving you to win her if you could. You would have done the same for me had you known. Jacqueline is now your wife; you are both happy. She will never hear of my love for her; but I tell you, Adair, that you may know I have been true to you, my comrade, as you have been to me. You might have escaped from prison earlier had you consented to leave me. It is something for us to remember, Nial, you here, I in the great hereafter, that even our love for the same woman could not break our friendship."

As I paused and glanced at Jacqueline she rose to her feet with the womanly dignity that surpasses the regal air of a queen. Would it have been better after all had I never read this letter to her? In doing so I had indeed brought about a strange situation.

"Jacqueline," I persisted, "nevertheless, had Ramon

stayed, would you have given your heart to him instead of to me? If he had asked you, would you have married him?"

My darling's beautiful eyes gazed steadily into mine.

"Nial," she answered proudly, "you and Ramon were faithful friends. What he did for you I, too, believe you would have done for him. But why trouble your peace and mine with idle 'ifs'? I love you, I am your wife. Are you not content?"

Years have passed since then, and Jacquette and I have had a happy life. We have three sons. The eldest is named for Dr. Nelson, who since his return from Bermuda has lived near us in New York, and the youngest for me. But the boy we love best, I think, is called Ramon. And I am not jealous, though I know Jacquette treasures, above every jewel but her wedding ring, a knot of blue ribbon that a gallant soldier, who was my friend and comrade, long wore next his heart.

French Canada's struggle of 1837 and 1838 is now almost forgotten. Independence she did not win, yet the lives of her heroes were not given in vain. Does not the dawn of the freedom she enjoys to-day date from the protest of the Patriot War?

AUTHOR'S NOTE

THE prison life of Nial Adair and the escape from the citadel of Quebec were actual incidents in the experience of Dr. Edward A. Theller, an ardent adherent of the Patriot Cause.

Sutherland and the other fellow-prisoners of Nial and Ramon in the grim old fortress were, during the spring of 1839, taken to Cornwall in the upper province. Here they were released and sent across the St. Lawrence to the American shore.

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